

Volume II.



Scriptural Comments

With....

Supplement

EMORY UNIVERSITY



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Rev. John C. Troy.



Yours Truly
H.C. Troy.

SCRIPTURAL COMMENTS

Volume II.

WITH SUPPLEMENT,

APPEARING IN THE

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BY

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PREFACE.

Through the goodness and mercy of God, I am permitted to publish the second number of Scriptural Comments, with Supplement, being part of my contributions to the Charlotte Observer since October, 1897. The kind reception given the first number of the Comments has made me bold to think that this number will meet with similar favor. It is sent out, as was the first, to enable the author to keep the ends near each other, and to glorify God, Whose he is, and Whom he serves, in faith and love.

As a part of the preface of this little book, my readers will excuse any lack of modesty in my appending a few words copied from Church and State, a goodly paper edited by Miss Mamie Bays and W. W. Bays, Jr. The former, by the way, has relieved me of much fatigue, necessarily, a part of physical weakness, by taking upon herself the task of compiling the articles, reading the proof sheets, and, in fact, doing much to aid in making the book complete. Her words, kind notices of the press all over the State, and hundreds of letters received from my readers, have been to me as apples of gold in pictures of silver, and made me to believe, with all my heart, that faith in God, and, also, in humanity, will bring "sun-lit days" in the gloomiest weather, and put silver linings on the darkest clouds.

"It was a special pleasure to be in the home of Rev. J. C. Troy, in Jonesboro. Our welcome caused us to feel at home from the first. Brother Troy's affliction is great,

but he bears it as a true soldier of Christ, and not one murmur passes his lips. He is a true child of God, and the consistency of his Christian character impresses one deeply at a single meeting. His cheerfulness is marked and is above the average of one who suffers so. It is a benediction to meet and converse with such a true follower of Jesus, and one can but be made better from such intercourse.

"Brother Troy is not permitted to preach from the pulpit, but he preaches numberless sermons to those who meet him in his home and by means of his pen. The religious department of the Charlotte Observer, of which he is the editor, is a regular feature of the paper, and one which is much enjoyed. His 'Scriptural Comments,' compiled from last year's articles, is a most readable book and well worth the small price asked for it. We were glad to learn its sale had been so good, and we trust this will continue until the edition is exhausted, and we hope he will live to compile other books as well.

"A most devoted wife and little daughter are Brother Troy's constant companions, and we pray their loving attention and devotion may be rewarded by their loved one's recovery. It is not beyond the power of God to restore His servant, and let most earnest prayer be made that such may be His will."

In conclusion, let me say that, which ever way the tide may turn, going out or coming in, it is all right with me, and God's will is my will. But I would say, "Brethren, pray for us."

The book does not attempt to settle disputed questions in theology. The matter contained in it is not pon-

derous. But the author thinks he has stated facts. And this being true, he has the right to believe that God will own and bless the work.

From the beginning to the end, I would have the little book preach the doctrine, Follow, in every condition of life, the steps of Jesus.

"If where they lead my Lord
I, too, be borne,
Planting my steps in His,
Weary and worn,
May the path carry me
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

If Thou the cup of pain
Givest to drink,
Let not my trembling lips
From the draught shrink.
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

JNO. C. TROY.

Jonesboro, N. C., October, 1898.

THE INVALID.—COMMENTS SUGGESTED BY HIS DISCIPLINE OF PAIN.

“Besides, all true soldiers of the cross have put on with their enlistment a duty, to do somewhat for and in the name of that Holy Emblem, and in these modern times, when the Believers no longer have nations and powers to contend with, they needs must do something to show that their faith is not vain. Men who are constant and great sufferers are watched by all who are thrown in contact with them, and as they endure, so is their Faith estimated, and they all owe the Savior a good example to others who have not yet been brought under the stern, if useful, discipline of Pain.”

The above we copy from the article in last Sunday’s Observer, contributed by The Invalid. We do so because in it there is so much truth; and to comment a little on two points:

i. That as “believers no longer have nations and powers to contend with, they needs must do something to show that their faith in not vain.” And yet, it is a fact that the Christian warfare, now, is no sham, but a veritable contest in which the nerve of men has the opportunity to show itself. Nerve, not cheek, is needed at this day; and the one who has it is sure to reach the goal. And the fight, of the man who really has faith in God, calls for a refinement of courage never excelled in any sanguinary warfare; either of ancient or modern times. The man who really means what he says, who invariably says the right thing, who fears God, and keeps His Commandments, has discovered that the offense of the cross is not ceased; and that he has a fight on his hands which must be renewed boldly every day. But his faith is not vain,

and the success following the daily battle proves it. The hardest work any man ever attempted is carrying the cross—of course folks who have never had dyspepsia or nervous prostration may deny the proposition—but nevertheless it is true; and the cross-bearer will be a conqueror in an every-day fight; and if faithful unto death, will be remembered as long as the boy who stood on the burning deck. The flames rolled on, he would not go, without his father's word; and because his father told him to stand there, he stood; and nothing but the blowing up of the powder magazine could move him. So God needs men in the fight who will stand in their "lot;" in the place where He has commanded them to stand; and by their heroism show to the world that they can endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. They may even glory in their infirmities; in that these very infirmities open a door that but for their appearing might have remained closed forever. There is nothing that brings out the pure gold like the smelting furnace. The dross is burnt up, and the stuff, itself, comes out purified, and fit for the Master's use. It takes fire to do thorough work. If you think you will not be able to go through the furnace you had better not "get religion," as some people term it. Religion means a fight.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me," Matt. 10:34-38.

2. The Invalid says again: "Men who are constant and great sufferers are watched by all who are thrown in

contact with them, and as they endure, so is their Faith estimated." This being true, what follows?

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:1-2.

That is, we are to look to Jesus as our pattern. The same patience He exercised in running the race we are to exhibit. A Christian without patience is out of the race; he is a dwarf, and cannot run well.

In writing these comments it is not with a view to attempt explanation of The Invalid's utterances. They are so plain—like the Bible on fundamental doctrines—that I have simply taken the extract as a text for my brief sermon. Many of us are helped and benefitted by his doctrine, and are always glad when he writes.

THE RIGHTEOUS NOT FORSAKEN.

"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Ps. 37:23. This is a very comforting passage of Scripture, and yet, it is a difficult matter to not be interested in the question of bread supply. The race problem, the money question or any other question, except that of one's personal salvation, are of minor import when brought into comparison with it. A worthy, Christian gentleman, living in the "Land of the Sky," had lost his position: and for weeks or months had no employment, and he and family were brought very near extreme want. One afternoon he called upon me—we were close friends. He spoke of a glowing sermon which he had heard in the

morning, and in commenting thereon, remarked that it was a very easy matter for the fat, well fed, well paid, intelligent minister to paint with glowing colors as he preached on the subject of faith; and he wondered if the preacher would have been so jolly, and so full of faith, had he known, that when the services concluded, he would, like him—the speaker—be compelled to sit down to a table almost bare of the necessities of life. And yet my friend, who is a righteous man, soon repented of the implied doubt conveyed by his remarks, and said “everything will yet be right;” and also added his belief in the preacher’s ability to deliver even a greater sermon on the subject of faith though the wolf stood at the door of the preacher’s home. The preacher in question is one of the men who is great because of his trust in God. The righteous are not forsaken, and his seed do not beg bread, but nevertheless there are instances which appear as a denial. Still, we know, and must believe, that God has all wisdom and skill by which to make available to his suffering children all they need. He has put great supplies in the hands of His Church, or the members, and the obligation falls heavy on every one of them to see that His will is carried out.

WHAT WE MUST FIRST SEEK.

“But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” —Matt. 6:33. I remarked to my wife this morning (Wednesday). “If we live until Sunday, perhaps it would be a good idea for us to have a baked chicken for dinner.” “I don’t know where it will come from,” was her reply. Our young lady visitor, who, by the way, was educated at the State Normal, and of course a sensible girl, came back with the answer: “It will come by faith.” I think we will have the chicken; and everything else that is essential for our

comfort—"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or wherewithal shall we be clothed! For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;" (and according to Mr. Enniss the Anglo-Saxon is not a Gentile,) "for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Seeking God's righteousness. That is, let our righteousness be the same as His, and there can be no doubt of the result.

"Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,
Tho' pressed by every foe;
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe.

"Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss
Of our eternal home."

PERFECT TRUST IN EXTREME TRIAL.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."—Job 13:15.

To most persons there is some affliction which they account the extreme of trouble, and we hear them say, in harmony with this feeling: "I could bear any sorrow except poverty; or I could bear any trial except death of my children; or I could bear any affliction except the loss of my reputation; or I could quietly endure any sorrow except the trial of suspense." If you will listen to the utterances of those around you, you will find many striking illustrations of the remark—that to most persons there is some affliction which they account the extreme of trouble. This estimate of particular troubles changes, however, with circumstances. The same affliction does not, in every stage of life, appear to some persons the climax of grief, and when a man has endured a variety of troubles, he loses, to some extent, his keen dread of par-

ticular calamities, and he would describe the lowest depth of grief by some such words as my text, "though He slay me."

Did Job refer to his own death, think you? Or, is the text a general representation of the extreme of sorrow? We think the latter, but in either case, the text is a high and noble expression of confidence—of childlike confidence in God.

The foregoing is a selection from a sermon preached long ago. The writer of the same is dead, but he still speaks, and in words that are easily understood, and that should be very helpful.

In commenting on this text, I am led to remark that it is seldom we ever trust one who is a stranger, unless his representations are backed by such credentials as are only given by men of character and integrity to those who are entitled thereto. If we are acquainted with a man, if we know, absolutely, that he is square, we trust him. So trust in God invariably comes from a mutual acquaintance. In a general sense all men trust God. And the text is often incorrectly quoted, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him;" but comparatively speaking, there are few only, who "trust in Him," as Job uttered the words. Trusting in God is an intelligent act or habit of the man. It is not like the infant resting in its mother's arms, but as the bride giving herself to the bride-groom; a conscious act.

Trusting in God is a fruit that has ripened perfectly by believing the representations which are given of God. God is spoken of as a refuge, a rock, Shepherd, Father and all of these He is. When God saith, "I will do this," He means it; and the man who trusts in Him is sure that not one jot or tittle of His word can fail. There is a wide difference between trusting God and trusting in God. Trust in God is a fruit of reconciliation with God. We do not trust in Him naturally, for we are alienated from God in our natural state. God is a stranger to the

natural heart of unbelief, but in the heart of the regenerated man He lives and abides; and because of this man has become reconciled to God's ways and dispensations; he can trust in Him.

All that possibly can be said of trusting in Him, whose we are and whom we claim to serve, (for I write to such as acknowledge that they have been bought by the blood) is illustrated in the case of Job. He imagines the direst calamity; for the point in this wonderful utterance, is in the pivot word, "though." "Though he slay me." The Christian man, who has been educated by applying the word to every form of adversity will say the same as Job. Everything may appear to work against me, but "I will trust in Him;" my heart gets weak, but "I will trust in Him;" my plans, for a living for self and family, are going to fail, but "I will trust in Him;" God seems to be acting strangely, but "I will trust in Him;" He seems sometimes to act unkindly; when I ask for bread, He gives me a stone; when I ask for meat, He gives me a scorpion; and I am almost ready to say, it is naught, it is naught; but directly I ask His pardon, I cling to His promises as the wrecked mariner clings to the spar, and the light comes, and God is still with me even though the sun did seem to hide His face and the winds to be all contrary; and "I will trust in Him." He appears to forget to be gracious, but "I will trust in Him." He has disappointed some of my fondest hopes, the ashes of which lie all about me, and I wonder why it is so; but we know not all His plans, and "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

"The morning mists that lie
About the day, that comes so softly in,
Hide all its secrets, from the searching eye,
And none may tell what want, or pain or sin
Shall break, new risen, from the enfolding shroud,
Nor what is in the cloud.

"But howsoe'er it be,
We dare go forth to meet the dim unseen,
Tranquil and patient; God is near and He
Will be our helper as He yet has been;
And let the day be fair or rough
We shall have strength enough."

"We may not always feel as Job felt, much less as some of his friends felt. We may not always speak as Job spake, or even as he acted. But so far as our text is concerned we may safely copy this most patient of men."

It seems that God does slay, but the slaying is all for a purpose. There is no death out of which God does not bring some new life. "Then when He slays that which you most cherish—a flower of paradise, a tree of life, a fatling of the flock—trust in Him, trust in Him, and go further, put yourself in a position to say, imagining something worse, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

In the matter of endurance, as applied to any kind of suffering, there are two ways, even though we have reached the point of extreme trial, viz: "One is to grin and bear it; the other is to sing and bear it." I accept the latter way because it is the best.

• ALL THINGS WORK FOR GOOD.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28. This verse reads, to some, as if there might be predestination in it. The writer if he had the disposition for theological discussion might prove that it doesn't. But as he considers himself to be one of the elect, "who are called according to His purpose," he concludes that such discussion is unnecessary and will pass on to say what he has in mind. In reading this very famous passage of Scripture, and which is so difficult at times, to reconcile with many of the events of life, it is well to note the fact that the Apostle teaches, not that all things work for good to every person, but only, "to them that love God." Now, if you really love God, nothing can happen in the course of human events that will not work for good. That you may not possess

the ability to see the good coming from certain disasters and disappointments, to which the flesh is subject at any moment, is no reason that the proposition is not true.

A good woman, whom I do not have the honor to know; but whose letter is evidence of intelligence and Christian life and which has interested me much, writes as follows:

"Dear Brother: In a recent discourse you say, 'God had nothing to do with the slaying of the men of the Maine, only in that, His law was violated, and they died. Cause and effect.' " She has quoted me correctly. Now she puts some straight, well directed questions. In order to be brief I will number them.

"1. How then are we who are bereaved and suffer through such disasters to realize to ourselves and acknowledge the hand of God in our affliction—accept the trial from our Father's hand—feel that it is sent for a definite purpose and that it is to benefit us in the end?

"2. However bitter and hard to bear, to feel that it is a God-appointed task and that heaven grants strength for these tasks?

"3. How look upon such dispensations as His will and dealings with us whatever may have been the immediate cause; and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and sincerely say, 'Thy will be done;' as we are so often exhorted to do?

"I am inclined to accept your theory as advanced in the discourse mentioned; but am unable to reconcile the two views. Please tell me how. I am anxiously and honestly seeking guidance and consolation, and make these inquiries of you to assist me. If you will answer through a discourse in the Semi-Weekly Observer or otherwise, you will oblige a sister struggling under great and heavy afflictions."

The questions were suggested by the words of the editor of this department to the effect that God had nothing to do with the slaying of the men of the Maine. Why

the statement? Read Exodus 20:13. "Thou shalt not kill" This divine commandment is directed to the Spaniard as much as to any other. Here is a ship loaded with precious human lives. She is quietly resting at anchor in the harbor of Havana. The men, with malice in their hearts to none, have finished the work of the day; and in their hammocks are sleeping, dreaming, many of them, perhaps, of the dear ones left in the land of the free. But why dwell on the event of that night, which, in all ages, will rest upon Spain as one of the blackest acts of her already black history of human cruelties, tortures and murders. The electric lights in the city, suddenly, as if to make darker the surroundings of the place where the hellish plot was to be consummated, went out. The whole power of the dynamo was used in sending the electric current which caused the explosion of the mine—and you know the rest. It can never be forgotten. The sufferings of the quarrelsome Cubans are as nothing compared with that deed which sent the hundreds of innocent Americans, without a moment's notice, to eternity. And if there be war with Spain that alone should be the cause. To say that our God, full of pity, justice, and mercy, had a hand in that deed of atrocity is to make Him an accessory, a party, to murder in the first degree; malicious, premeditated, the Lord only knows how long; inexcusable and more than devilish in conception, concoction, and consummation. That God permitted it, yes; for when He says to man: "Thou shalt not kill," the conclusion legitimately follows that in man there is a disposition to murder but God tells him to hold it down; and if the man, after the commandment "Thou shalt not," puts his finger on the button, the current will start and if it comes in contact with dynamite, or other explosive material there will be trouble. But mind you, don't have any idea that God will stop that current. It goes according to law; but its going brings a result that is contrary to law; plainly expressed: "Thou shalt not kill."

The questions of that good woman might be answered collectively by reading the text: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Evidently she does love Him; and therefore I would give her for comfort and consolation such parts of the Word of God as are of like tenor with the text. It may be some one on that ship was dear to her, or at any rate, it is reasonable to conclude that she has suffered as many others have done. I would not tell her to refrain from mourning, for we are taught that comfort comes to them who mourn. But she need not expect this blessing through any of man's words, but go to the divine source, filled with resignation and submission, and obtain the power to drink without murmur or complaint from the chalice of suffering, that, in the course of human events, has fallen to her lot. She is inclined to accept my theory, but cannot reconcile it with the view indicated in her questions. Paradoxical as the two views might appear, they are not irreconcilable. It is generally believed, and has been so stated in the papers, that the Spaniards destroyed the Maine; and consequently were the murderers of the men on board. If this be a fact then God, certainly, "only in that, His law was violated," had nothing to do with it. That this view is not altogether in opposition to that expressed in the questions can be readily seen. Let us answer seriatim: (Read the questions.)

1. It is not necessary for us "to realize to ourselves" that such disasters are committed by the hand of God. I would not preach that doctrine. But that the affliction and trial in consequence thereof are permitted of Him, and for our own sake and His glory, we must bear them.

2. Therefore the task, in bearing bravely these afflictions though not of His appointment, is by His permission.

3. We are not to look upon dispensations which clearly are not His will as coming from Him. His word throughout quivers with the tenderness of a father's love and as-

sures me that He does not willingly afflict His children. No disaster, however awful, and even though it comes directly through treachery and a violation, by man, of God's law, should for a moment cause us to stagger in our devotion to Him; nor to prevent us humbling "ourselves under the mighty hand." Mighty and great as His hand may be it is one that is filled with mercy.

The good woman says she is "struggling under great and heavy afflictions" and writes me for "guidance and consolation." I feel the responsibility of the task and the Father knows that her requests have been carefully and prayerfully considered. In some way I cannot now see, the disaster which led to the letter, will work for good. God has brought good through evil dispensations without in any way being connected with the evil.

If it were not for His word alone I would give up the fight; for I, also, have more to endure than I would attempt to write. If it were not for the same source of strength it probably would be best for us all to give up struggling in affliction. Not wishing to present any of my own words for the comfort and consolation of this good woman, and others similarly situated, I have searched the Book and here is what I preach in accordance with the command: "Preach the word."

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but things which are not seen are eternal." I. Cor. 4:17-18. Let us all remember that in due season we will reap if we faint not. But let us not allow ourselves at any time, nor under any circumstances, to believe that God, our Heavenly Father, is ever connected with such deeds of treachery and wickedness as make black, with the very blackness of darkness, the pages of history. Our country is in mourning, and the clouds of war appear to hover about us, and the nation's

people are in suspense and how it will result we know not. But all the trouble is not from God. He stands for peace and is not willing that crime should follow crime. But if we love God "all things will work together for good." But the question is, do we love Him? If not, then all things may work in the opposite direction. Then we may paraphrase and say: "And we know that all things work together for bad to them that do not love God." The evidence that we love Him is in the keeping of the commandments. The text is only for them who do. Look out Spaniard! Remember the Maine! "Thou shalt not kill!"

THE ADVOCATE.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I John 2:1. In connection with this text read Rom. 8:34; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25 and 9:24. There is no doubt in my mind that these words are addressed to Christians. The divine writer exhorts to live free from sin. "That ye sin not." That is, don't violate the law. We know that sin is violation of law. It seems the writer would not have asked us to live an impossibility. If a man can keep the law one day, why not two days? Every day? But few there are who do keep it every day. And while this correct life, even here, is a possibility, the Word gives us a chance in case of failure. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I prefer to live a straight life in every particular; but if I make a slip, as I am often conscious of doing, forgiveness and cleansing are promised on condition. For "if any man sin, we have an advocate." The office of an advocate is well known. He pleads the cause of another. We speak of learned lawyers and

eloquent advocates. If there were no sin, violation of law, there would be no necessity for such an office. Christ cannot be the advocate of an unbeliever because he has never put himself in His hands. He is, however, the advocate of believers though their lives be without fruit. A specimen of His advocacy in this respect, is seen in the parable of the barren fig tree. It had been planted and cared for, and the expectation, in consequence, was fruit. But at the end of three years none was found. The owner concluded to have it destroyed. It is useless for the purpose intended. Three years he had come seeking fruit "on this fig tree." "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" The dresser of the vineyard has asked that it might have another year. Then after that if it did not bear fruit let it be cut down. It supposed this appeal for further extension was granted. So we may believe that Christ, as an advocate, is ever, in some mysterious manner, pleading for the unfruitful and sinful child of God. If after all the care, pleading, and opportunity he continues his violation of law, which may be either by overt acts or nonconformity thereto, he may expect in the end to be cut down in the midst of his crime, and then, when he meets Christ it will be to appear before His judgment seat. And he can expect only such treatment as a criminal, who had repeatedly violated the law, and times without number been allowed to go with the promise of amendment in life and conduct; which promise, however, had not been kept. It will not do to think that Christ as an advocate will continue to plead when the man continually violates the law and shows no sign of fruit. But it is a fact stated with clearness and positiveness that He is our advocate. That if we sin, we may call on Him; and that He will treat His clients in the right way, is evidenced by these words in His credentials: "Jesus Christ the righteous." The righteous advocate is the one to be always desired when having need of such a friend. No priest nor bishop nor pope can stand and make me without sin. Christ is the only legal intercessor,

mediator and advocate. I confess to Him directly and not to Him through a human agent or attorney. He speaks to every sinner to believe on Him and that He is the door by which any man may enter and be saved. With my last breath I would trust only in the merits of the Christ. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." It is indeed a wonderful statement. It is foolishness to many who hear it. But just the same it is the power of God to such as believe it. And because He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world His work as an advocate cannot fail when a human, penitent and sincere, puts his cause in His hands. I do not know the manner of operation, the procedure in the divine court, neither am I going to worry my brain in trying to find out. This much is sure; I have a lot more confidence in the chance of the man who with a broken and contrite spirit calls upon Jesus to conduct his cause, than I have for a lot of the sanctified band which have reached such a point of personal purity and sinless perfection as to never need the Savior in His office of an advocate; and who, because they never do or think a wrong have eliminated from the Lord's prayer "forgive us our trespasses." They will use the petition for others, but not for themselves. They are never liable for trespass. The most of this class, with which I come in contact, remind me of pea-cocks. One fellow proudly told me in his home that he had not asked the Lord in seven years to forgive his sins. That in that time he had committed none. I didn't believe him. When you take, as a definition of sin, transgression of the law; it looks as if a man, making such a declaration, that he had been perfect so many years, had lost his hatchet. Lying is certainly one of the transgressions of divine law for which the lake that burns with fire and brimstone was prepared. I do not mean to say that a sinless life is not possible; but I do mean to say that the men whom I have met and who declare that they have

reached that point, never struck me as being any better, and not as good as many who did not make such a sky high profession. That's the way it appeared to me.

"He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Keeping the commandments is the greatest test. And yet if we fail, let us acknowledge the fact, confess our sins, and ask His intercession. That is the way marked out. Watchfulness and prayer will aid us much. If we practice these means of grace in connection with the work of the Advocate we will come out all right. But remember there is such a thing as growth in grace and that we can never expect to be anything more than dwarfs if we do not the part which God commands of us all to give Him our hearts. He has pardoned many times, but the day is coming when Christ becomes a judge. How will it be then with no one to plead? Better by repentance and faith accept Him now, and there will be no future trouble. He can't do everything and you nothing and then give you the crown. He has done so much for you; what have you done for Him?

There were two brothers. One worthless, the other, a successful and an honored advocate. The former often appeared in the court as a violator of the law. The position and character of the latter made his appeals successful when asking clemency in behalf of the criminal brother. In consequence of these eloquent and persuasive appeals the bad man was permitted to go without punishment for his unlawful deeds. But in due time the advocate was elevated to the bench. The man again was brought before the judge. But this time he had no advocate. The judge reminded him of the number of times he had appeared and advocated his cause. He could do so no more. He had done much for the criminal and he had failed to appreciate this work. There was only one thing now and that the infliction of the penalty for the violated law. There is a great difference in the office of advocate and judge. As

the latter Jesus will appear at His second coming. For all of His advocacy if you have failed to give your life to His cause there can be but one result according to the law—sentence. What will it be? “And these,” the unrighteous, “shall go away into everlasting punishment.” “But the righteous,” they who failed not to minister unto the needy, the stranger, the sick, the prisoner; who failed not in a sympathy for and a consecration to the cause of Him who gave His life for us; go “into life eternal.” Let us employ the righteous advocate and then do as He directs.

IS HE YOUR SHEPHERD?

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Ps. 23:1.—The pivot word in this text is “my.” When you read it why not make it personal? A shepherd is a person employed to attend and care for sheep. Ministers, our heavenly Father, and the Savior are, in the Scriptures, denominated, shepherds. We know then that if Jesus is our Shepherd, necessarily He will care for His sheep. “My shepherd!” To me, these words, as to thousands of others, are inexpressibly precious. This Psalm is probably known by more persons, young and old, than any other chapter in the Bible. It has been known by me since I was taught: “Now I lay me down to sleep.” We learn it in youth, and remember it in death. But its beauty, power and effect cannot be appreciated until with all our hearts, with a full knowledge of the real meaning of the word, we say: My Shepherd! Then the conclusion is irresistibly forced upon us that in truth we shall never want. That there is one whose care for us never ceases; and who has promised to go with us even unto the end. Reliance upon Him and a faithful uncomplaining following in His footsteps, even though, often, they lead into Gethsemane itself, is what makes the religion of the Lord Jesus, the grandest

and most potent fact of the universe. I love to read the dying testimony of a man like the late Rev. W. G. Vardell. He had followed this Shepherd, and when the time comes to enter the valley, he does so with the assurance that the blood of Jesus, the Shepherd, who died for the sheep, cleanses from all sin; and yet when dying, and too weak to speak above a whisper, says: "My only prayer is 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" The Christian, when called to enter the shades of death, does not meet the enemy, which is to be destroyed finally in the coming of Christ the second time, with the spirit of bravado; but with an abiding faith in His Shepherd, he may walk into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and fear no evil. Death itself is nothing to laugh at and treat with indifference. The very thought of it, the hours of dissolution, awaken in me a sense of my responsibility to Him who created us; and not only a sense of responsibility to Him, but also that which I am due to my fellow man. There can no evil fall in the lot of a good man; and when the shades of night appear and his hour has come to die, if faithfully he has followed the steps of the Nazarene, why need he fear? What is to hinder him saying, even though his earthly hopes may be shattered: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life?" And when the crape hangs on the door because the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl broken, the wheel broken at the cistern, will there be any reason to doubt that he, who followed the Shepherd, is still dwelling "in the house of the Lord forever?" The dust has returned to the earth as it was, and the spirit has gone to God who gave it. The precious dust remains, so also the spirit, for is not God a spirit, and is He not everywhere? Then when the spirit has gone to God it cannot be far away. I want my readers in to-day's Observer to take this Psalm, read it, meditate on it, absorb it; and say as you have never done before: "My Shepherd!"

"My cup runneth over." He loves his flock, and so feeds the sheep upon the bread and water of everlasting life that it is not hard to realize the fullness of God. "He brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love." Though some of us may be weak and feeble and careworn, how delightful the thought, we are not deserters nor aliens; but still live under the flag. Nestle thee close to the Shepherd; keep in touch with Him, and all is well. He knows what we need, and in some way or other the Lord will provide. "I shall not want." Give away your doubts and let there be faith in Him.

The other day I received a letter from a friend who has plenty in this life, but he becomes every once in a while a sick sheep; and needs nursing and also a little punishment with it. He should have a few pebbles to be thrown at him and hit him. He says his financial matters are interfering with his religious duties. I wrote him to be ashamed of himself, that he surely needed something to take the twist out of him. And yet we know that many become sick just as he, and for the same cause. These things ought not so to be. When I find myself in such condition the greater the necessity to get closer to the Shepherd; and because financial depression is before us much of the time there is greater need for nearness and consecration to Him who teaches that a man's life does not consist in these earthly things of which he is possessed.

"Precious thought my Father knoweth,
Careth for His child,
Bids me nestle closer to Him,
When the storms beat wild,
Though my earthly hopes are shattered,
And the tear drops fall,
Yet He is Himself my solace,
Yea, my all in all."

AN ANSWERED PRAYER.

We know the Bible records many answers to prayer. There are also instances in this life where we notice that the prayer of the righteous availeth much. If this be not a true statement then there is much in the Bible on this subject that would be absolutely worthless. Many times prayers are answered and the credit is not given to God. Still I am a mighty believer in co-operation. If there were burglars in town who had been entering the homes of my neighbors to the extent as to alarm me, and I had concluded to make it a subject of prayer, I would certainly not forget after praying, to see that all the doors were locked and the windows securely fastened. My impression is that this would be the sensible plan even though my prayer was so specific as to expressly petition that the burglars might not get into my house. You let a man know sometimes that you are praying for him, that you are interested and concerned for his welfare; and many times this fact alone is a mighty stimulus to him for whom you pray. Drop him a line; speak a word; watch the effect.

One year ago a good woman, one in whom all have confidence, wrote me these words: "I am praying that this may be, indeed, the brightest, happiest year of your life; though weak in body, may you be strong in spirit and grow in grace daily, and I pray that you may be 'strengthened wth all might according to his glorious power; unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness'"—Col. 1:11. Please read the words over again. How specific. She was asking God a special favor. No kin to me except we are owned by the same master. I will write her to-day, that her prayer has been answered.

She saw me when I fell, and knew how much I needed such words.

HANG OUT THE SCARLET THREAD.

"And she bound the scarlet line in the window."
Joshua 2:21.

And that is what saved her and her household when the soldiers came. Obedience to orders is faith in action. Joshua the commanding officer of the Lord's army had sent out spies to view the land, and Jericho. A woman, Rahab, the harlot, lodged the men and hid them from the searching party sent out by the King of Jericho. For her services she was told that when the army came into the land, if the line of scarlet thread was in the window it would be well with her and her people. The army came, and the city, with all of its inhabitants, was destroyed; but those in the house, where appeared the line of scarlet thread were saved. "And Joshua saved Rahab, the harlot, alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."

The young man, who died in Asheville the other day, and on his death bed repented of a life of infidelity, was late in hanging out the thread, but I suppose, in time to meet the divine requirements. But how much happier his days had he been earlier in looking after this important matter. The editor of this paper in an editorial a few days since remarked that success was the point of view from which we judged the deeds of men. Such expressions as these strike me forcibly for the reason of the truth contained therein. But however successful a man may be from a worldly point of view he is a dead failure if he has failed to bind the line of scarlet thread in the window. The biggest fool in the world is the devil; because he dares to put himself in array against God. The next largest fool is the man in the enjoyment of reason and the multitudes of good things furnished by a beneficent Hand, who by his life denies that he owes any allegiance to the One who has given him an opportunity to escape the consequences of sin and goes on to the very end, with no line of scarlet in the window of

his life. The line of scarlet is doing exactly what God commands to be done. The obedient are the successful and the saved ones; if the Bible is the book to believe. Rahab, of course, was a bad character; but she had the good sense to hang out the thread. How I hope that our brave soldier boys, in camp and battle, may hear, and obey the voice of the Captain of our salvation, and hang out the scarlet thread. The bravest men need have no fear of results when they take the same decided stand for Christ that they have taken for their country. And they well know that in this, as in days past, it requires as much courage to fight sin as to combat the Spaniards. As the scarlet thread saved the woman, or was the token of her salvation, so the name Jesus, spoken in faith, will inure to the salvation of all who may use it. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." No creed, no sect, no anything can avail; it must be Christ, or you are done for; and all other systems have tumbled. Some one has asked "what's in a name?" Not much in many. But in this name there is salvation. And therefore there can be no comfort in any other. The war is on us every day; let the fight be carried on under the banner of His love. Let this name be the line of scarlet thread that you bind in the window of your soul. This name is given among men that they may be saved. He trod the winepress alone; and He alone can save. When temptations gather around you breathe that name in prayer. So to the soldiers, and all others, who may read these words to-day I send this for a token. The name of Jesus; our only hope and comfort. Take it with you; and then onward Christian soldiers. Some of you may not fight many battles. But you are all right if the scarlet thread is in place.

"Stand up ! stand up for Jesus !
The strife will not be long ;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song :

To him that overcometh,
A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of Glory
Shall reign eternally."

THE MISSION OF CHRIST.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10.

When I receive the Charlotte Sunday Observer my first impulse is to see if there is any thing of a religious nature contained therein. Naturally, like the fellow who begins to look if the editor has put in his piece, I turn to the religious department. (Now I do not mean to write any thing that will conflict with the article accompanying this.) After getting all I can out of that, I look up the "Christian Endeavor" column, then the editorial page, the letter from Raleigh, the New York letter, etc. But in last Sunday's about the first thing that caught my eye was an article headed: "Saved by Jerry McAuley." I read that first, and then, in my heart, thanked the editor for making this selection from the New York Sun. After I had read the account of the anniversary exercises of the founding of the mission, together with the testimony given by many to the great results following the work of the one who had been taken from the gutter, I thanked God that poor, sinful, degraded man had in Christ a Savior whose precious blood was sufficient to cleanse him from all sin and unrighteousness; and the words declaring the mission of Christ and which head the present article fastened upon my mind as they have done hundreds of times before. John Howard and Florence Nightingale had their missions; and their work, like that of Jerry McAuley, was built on the foundation which is laid in Christ. The mission of some is to become famous; of others, to gain wealth; but the fact is, every individual realizes that he has some mission.

That of Christ is to save the lost man. I prefer that to the word soul. It is hard, and even the greatest of theologians have failed, to tell exactly the true meaning of the word soul. But we all understand the word lost, as applied to man. Out in the desert of sin, helpless and ready to die, Jesus found him. Like a lost sheep he had strayed away from the fold. Like the lost coin which the woman was so eager to find, lest its value should become impaired; so Jesus was anxious, and is still, to restore man to the image of God. He takes him out of the veriest sink holes of the world's wickedness, creating within him a new heart and renewing within him a right spirit. I do not put a premium on the man who has prostituted talent and destroyed usefulness by unexemplary conduct; but I do glory in the declaration of the text; that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Not in heaven, that is not the idea. I never pray to be saved in heaven; but I do pray to be saved here; saved for this earth, and then when we enter upon a new estate we will discover that the real salvation has already taken place. That's why I like it so well; because the salvation of Christ is a reality to be enjoyed in this world.

Standing one night, with a week's wages in pocket, directly between the Young Men's Christian Association building in a Western city and a brilliantly lighted saloon, I was halting between two opinions as to which I would enter. Gospel singing was heard coming from the former; other music, winning and seductive, like the voice of the Sirens, came from the latter. I finally decided, and entered the Gospel Inn. It was sweet to be in there, and they treated me like I was a man. Men told in no uncertain strain how Christ had been their salvation. I was impressed, deeply so; and directly arose and said: "Will you pray for me? I am a lost man." And they came to me, and showed their interest in the stranger who had fallen in their midst. I believed in them. While not exactly satisfied with my own state of mind I went out,

satisfied, however, of one thing, that they desired me to become a Christian. Soon the matter was settled in my own home, when I did believe that Christ saved me; and it has been settled ever since. He is mine and I am His; and He knows it. There is where I am resting to-night, as I write these plain words for the Sunday Observer. "Simply to Thy cross I cling." It is the grandest truth of the universe, that of the atonement, Christ the just dying for the unjust. And to the poor man struggling to rid himself of sin in any of its forms, I present to him Jesus, the Savior. Accept Him; go to church, and tell that He is your Savior. Telegraph it to your dear old mother that Jesus has found you. Speak of it everywhere; not of what you have done, but of the "precious blood of Christ." Be witnesses for Him.

So far reaching is the atonement of Christ in its effects that we must even believe that the despicable wretch, Ryan, who so cruelly, and apparently with premeditation, murdered his best friend, would be pardoned his fearful sin, if he, with true penitence, would call upon His Lord. It seems that this statement cannot be true, yet, it is the teaching of divine writ. But from all indications the murderer is one with whom the Spirit of God does not strive.

There are commentators who teach that Judas, in the words: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood," possibly showed sufficient godly sorrow for his sin as to bring him within the pale of salvation. I know nothing as to the result of Judas' act after His death; but of this I am sure, Jesus would have been as willing to save even this traitor, if he had exhibited a truly penitent spirit, as He was the men who crucified Him, whom He prayed God to forgive.

In other planets there may be sin; but not one of them has a Savior whose way of salvation is so plain, simple and full as that which God has given us in His only begotten Son. "I am the way." He wants to save us now; and

when He is so anxious why not open the door of a selfish and stubborn heart and let Him in? "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

THANKSGIVING NOTES.

Text: Selections from the 103rd Psalm.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name." The word bless is an expression, in this instance, of gratitude. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." The tendency of man is to forget not only benefactions but the benefactor. What are some of the benefits coming from the Lord?

Let the Psalmist answer.

1. Forgiveness of iniquity. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." Iniquity makes an impassable gulf between God and man. God will not hear nor associate with a man who regards iniquity in his heart. But when he is purged of this; when he shows a penitent spirit and forsakes iniquity God promises to forgive all; and the creature is then brought to the relation which God would have him to occupy and sustain. If I, if the reader, has iniquity, let him know that God will forgive it, if he comes to Him in the proper spirit. Truly a gracious benefit.

2. Healing diseases. "Who healeth all thy diseases." Wonderful utterance. When a physician is successful in bringing a man through a great crisis and saves life, how his praise and competency and success are sounded. That is right; but there are diseases in the presence of which the most competent physician or surgeon must acknowledge his inability to cure. Here he can do nothing; but God takes the case, whatever its nature; and when placed in His hands, He heals. To-day there are thousands of thankful hearts giving praise for this divine healing. It

has come to me; for He, and He alone, has wrought so great a cure that every day is one of thanksgiving, and on my knees, with my little family gathered around me, I can thank Him for the radical cure which enables me to say, "In whatsoever state I am, I have learned therewith to be content." "Thy will be done." If that is not divine healing, what is it?

3. Redeemed life. "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." This is the greatest benefit of all. I object to any system of ethics that puts off redemption as the crowning act. The great transaction is done, has been consummated. We are no longer slaves, but children of liberty; bought with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Standing behind the blood we are safe, and saved; saved now. That's the teaching; and well we may call it a benefit for which to give thanks. No destruction for such as have committed themselves to Christ, and are leaning on His arm.

4. Crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies. "Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies." The whole world should acknowledge this statement as true. As I write these words I hear the bells ringing for the people to come and say so. But there are so many who refuse, in the very face of accumulative evidence, to give thanks unto Him, who, daily and hourly, is pouring blessings without stint upon the just and unjust. The loving kindness of God is all around us, while His mercy is without limit. Let us give thanks for the same.

5. Good things to eat. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things." Especially is this true of to-day. And many there are who will enjoy these things if the stomach be in condition to receive them. One brother, a preacher, in sending me a check for books sold, remarked in the letter: "Tell that good woman she must have a thanksgiving turkey." The turkey is roasting now, and another preacher is coming to help devour the

same. And when we sit at the table to-day we will bow our heads and lift our hearts to God in thankfulness for the good dinner before us; and of course we will also remember the man of God who was directed, divinely of course, to make the dinner a certainty. And in another letter, from a preacher who stands very high in the neighborhood of Greensboro, or any other town where he may happen to be, were the words: "Brother —— was right in saying that Sister Troy must have a turkey for Thanksgiving. She must have one for Christmas also, and I will be responsible for one of them." And so the good work goes on. The turkey business at our house is a fixed fact now. First a chicken, then a chicken again (but the brother, a subscriber of The Observer, wrote me to say nothing about it; but chickens and turkeys fill me up to such an extent that it is hard to keep from it); and now, I know not what will come next, probably a quarter of beef. But last night the Methodist preacher in this town sent up some sausage. His wife made it out of pork. When a Methodist sends anything of this kind from the parsonage you may count on its being unadulterated. I can't eat such things now, but there are others who can, and therefore I am thankful. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things." God grant that none of His children shall be hungry to-day; and if His word is carried out my prayer will be answered.

My little girl said this morning: "Papa, does the President want everybody to do something for the poor little girls and boys to-day?" I replied: "Yes, and God wants us to look after them every day." And then I told her how good God had been to us, and that in the letters I received from friends whom God had raised up to help us fight our battles there were few failing to make mention of her. Her eyes brightened and her face was wreathed in smiles. That was thanksgiving.

Some of my friends say they must decline to buy my book because it contains the contributions furnished a

Sunday newspaper. That's all right. The commendation received from many who read *The Observer*, and have taken my work, gives me great cause for gratitude. "The Lord He is good and a stronghold in the time of trouble." I thank God for a pulpit anywhere; and in writing for my department I am doing God's will.

Our country is full of grateful and thanksgiving people. Let everybody say: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and let all that is within me bless his holy name." And now, Let everybody say: "Bless the Lord, O my soul;" let us abide in the ship, and pull for the shore. God is with us.

GIVING A HAND.

"And He took him by the right hand and lifted him up."
—Acts 3:7.

It is customary, especially with Methodist preachers, at the closing of the year, to take a retrospective glance at the year's work, and to give to their hearers a recapitulation of what they have been, under the Providence of God, enabled to accomplish. This Methodist preacher has no way of counting converts. His pulpit has been from the department of this paper given entirely to the consideration of religious subjects, and he goes on the witness stand and testifies that whether he has been a benefit to others or no, great benefit has come to him by his relation thereto. The readers of the *Observer* will be willing, I am sure, to extend charity, so that I may in a personal sense show the manner in which this benefit has come. At the beginning of the year, prompted by a goodly spirit, I wrote to the editor and submitted to him the proposition that I might conduct a religious department. He assented. I have, though bound down by infirmity, done the work honestly faithfully, lovingly. That it has been of such a nature as to commend itself to every one, I have my doubts. That it has been acceptable to Him who commands my actions

and life, I have no doubt. He has been my comfort, stay and guide. In the first days of the year, a Christian woman, to whom I once had the honor to preach and to visit as her pastor, wrote me that she prayed, even amidst afflictions and sorrows, that the New Year might be to me the happiest of my life. Her prayer is answered. The Year soon to close has brought me suffering, trial, pain, but even so, it has been full of sunlit days. Why? Because He who said: "Come, follow me," has been the guide; and others, many of them in sending messages of love and sympathy, have thereby taken me by the right hand, and lifted me up. I couldn't have made it by myself; but with them and God to help, success has come, and I am up. Let me present some of the evidence:

"Nov. 4th, 1897.

"Dear Bro. Troy: I enclose you money order, the price of your new publication from the Charlotte Observer office. I have been a constant subscriber to that paper ever since the present able editor took charge. I read your Sunday communications with great interest. They are characterized by originality, freshness and naturalness which put them at a refreshing and charming distance from the great bulk of modern newspaper articles—fashioned, for the most part, after the model of the "dry bones of the valley." Besides, anyone, especially in our itinerant rank, who patiently and cheerfully bears up under protracted illness, excites my admiration and deepest sympathies. God bless you and yours, my brother.

The foregoing is from the pen of a leading minister of the North Carolina Methodist Conference. Subsequently he sent the following:

"Nov. 8th, 1897.

"My Dear Brother: I preached at _____ yesterday morning, and here last night. I made mention of you and your nice pamphlet. I secured eight subscriptions

there, which you may send me at ——, and I will distribute them to save you the work of writing names and sending to each one separately. I secured seventeen here, which you may send to me in bulk. I send check for the whole number. Tell your good wife that I hope she can afford a turkey for Thanksgiving. And that dear little girl! Tell her that the multiplication table and prayers are both mighty good things, but not to get them too badly mixed. With love."

One who is now preaching in your city, but until recently stationed elsewhere, wrote as follows:

"Dear Brother Troy: I like the tone of your articles in the Charlotte Observer. Continue to write. It will do you good, and also others."

Another Christian friend writes: "You were wise in selecting the contributions in the Observer to make up your book. It is very readable. I enclose one dollar. Send me two copies. The change you may keep for another chicken, but don't make personal mention." The writer of these words is a man I have never met, but he will excuse me for saying that God only knows how much of happiness his many brotherly letters have brought to me. I will promise not to give his name.

"Dear Troy: Yours, 29th ultimo, with copy of your book has been received. I am delighted to have a word with you. I have been a reader of your department in the Charlotte Observer, and have enjoyed every line written by you. I am sorry that you are helpless, but who knows but that you may do more for Christ and the upbuilding of His kingdom by your affliction. 'Thy ways are past finding out.' I enclose price of book."

"Dear John: Yours to hand and appreciated. I would like to write you at length, but I am very busy these days, and my moments are not at my disposal. I send a small amount to go to your book fund. As soon as I have time, I am going to read your book and see how you look at things. 'May God bless you and help you.'

—Gal. 1:3, 4, 5." The "small amount" was much to me; and though he gave it for one book, it has not caused any head expansion, and they still go at the old price.

"My Dear John: Yes, I've read your book with much pleasure, and cheerfully enclose the amount. I cherish the hope of meeting you again on this side of the river; but should I not, God grant that we may meet in that upper and better world where there is no more parting. I can crave no worthier benediction for you than that you may continue in the same life work as evinced by your writings."

"My Dear Sir: I have read your book with much pleasure, and trust with much profit. I trust your physicians are mistaken as to your condition, and that you will soon be a strong man again, and be able for many years to carry on the good work you were doing so successfully when your health gave way."

"My Dear John: I enclose with much pleasure the price of your book. I read the contributions as they appeared, and always enjoyed them, for two reasons: 1st, They have genuine merit; and, 2nd, they were from the pen of an old and much valued friend. You are one minister of the Gospel of Jesus in whom I have absolute confidence. I have always thought of your affliction with sincere regret."

This letter is from one of the ablest lawyers in the State. He is of course my friend. He is a man who has never embraced religion from the orthodox standpoint. His words: "You are one minister in whom I have absolute confidence," touch me deeply. If I had nothing else in the world as an incentive to be "faithful unto death," these words would be, that I might never show the white feather to Him.

"My Dear John: Your letter gave me great pleasure. It recalled scenes that are so happy and faces that I love. I have thought of you often, and it gives me pain to think of your condition. Your Christian resignation is indeed

beautiful. It would be a sincere pleasure to meet you. Your picture in your pamphlet shows that you have changed very little.....God bless you, John, and answer the prayer of your dear little child. Kiss her for me, and receive the warm love of your old friend.” This friend has recently sent out an address that has been read all over the State.

“Dear John: I assure you, my dear boy (I say boy, as I think of you as such, and my love for you is as fresh and true as it was when we were boys together), if I do not write you long letters, you will take the will for the deed. My friendship for my old friend and room-mate is just as strong as it was when we would say ‘Good-bye’ for a few short weeks, and then return again.

“Yes, it does me good to hear of the good work you are doing. The first opportunity, I am going to avail myself of your kind invitation and come to see you.

“Why can’t you come and see me? If you will come and spend a few days and preach a sermon for us, I will pay all expenses. I hope I am not out of order in offering to do this. I believe that is the custom.” After concluding, he adds a P. S.: “Send me ten more of your books.” That was the third order for ten. I wrote him his orders received prompt attention. As to his being out of order in offering to pay my expenses to his dear home, I replied that I would answer by an incident. A friend called when I was quite ill at Asheville. With some hesitation he said: “Brother Troy, would I insult you if I offered you two dollars?” I replied: “You must think I am mighty easily insulted.” If I get strong, sufficiently, I will go and see him a few days, and we will talk of the sweet long ago when we were happy boys at the old H. M. A., of the fried chicken and big biscuit at Abel Payne’s and Billy Bingham’s. When the shades of evening have fallen about us, I will ask the privilege of bowing with him and family about the household altar, and offer a prayer, thanking God for so true a friend, and

with faith will ask that His presence shall forever abide not only upon this home, but upon all who in the name of Christ have extended the right hand.

These letters are not reported in full. They are from representative men from the mountains to the sea, preachers, lawyers, manufacturers. They are Episcopalian, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist. It is a case that draws the golden chain of Christian brotherhood. I do not know how the sentiment of the letters may strike others, but as for me they seem to breathe the spirit of Christian education; and as Dr. Brooks prayed, so do I, "God bless Christian education, from whatever source it may come." Amen! I ask no grander honor than the friendship and confidence of these men. These are only a part of what the mail has brought to me. Whether my work in The Observer has been of pleasure to them they are the best judges. They all read it. The proposition was at the beginning that I had been benefitted, blessed, lifted up. The evidence is before you, gentlemen of the jury. I rest the case.

In conclusion, I have to say that as the beneficiary of the kind expressions, and the substantial benefactions accompanying them, I have not been so selfishly absorbed in the latter as to lose sight of the real Benefactor. It is all of God; and, like the one of the ten which was cleansed, I this day have "turned back" to glorify God. If I be so fortunate as to have a part in the first resurrection, I shall say to my Master, of many: "They took me by the right hand and lifted me up." And His reply, "Inasmuch as ye did unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Should Conference meet to-morrow, my report would be full: "Have had a good year, Bishop." And then, when the appointments were being read, should there fall from the lips of the honored man: "Religious Department, Charlotte Observer, John C. Troy," I would be satisfied, and thank God for the appointment, with the

prayer that I might give a service beneficial to humanity, and this would be for God.

Christmas is coming; mine is already on, and before it is over I expect to be full of joy. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11.

A happy Christmas to you all. God be with you till we meet again, which I hope will be next Sunday.

THE WISE MEN SEEKING JESUS.—CHRISTMAS SERMON.

Text: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Matt. 2:1-2.

A great many men spend time, unnecessarily, in attempting to solve puzzles. I am no puzzle worker. Never was so inclined. If I were, would soon have to give up the attempt on account of a "swimming in the head." I once knew a Sunday school teacher who spent twenty minutes in discussing with the class the question, which two of the disciples they were whom the Lord sent for the colt. The thing was lively for a while, and every man had his opinion on the matter, one man going so far into the mystery as to state that he didn't know but "what Judas was one of 'em." The point, of course, is that the Lord had need of the colt, and from that the practical conclusions were drawn. But the teacher didn't see it that way, for there are teachers and teachers. So, in our text, it doesn't make a particle of difference from what part of the earth the wise come. That is not the point. "Tradition says that there were three Kings, which, however, we dismiss by naming it. They might be kings, and they might be subjects; they might be three and they

might be thirteen, for aught the evangelist says on the subject." That has nothing to do with it. The point is, they came, and they were wise in doing so, because they were seeking a Savior.

It has been many centuries since the event recorded in the text. But from that day until this the truly wise have been seeking Christ. Thousands, aye, millions, have found Him; and all who seek Him, with the whole heart, will never fail in their search. The cry is made that even after all these centuries of a preached Christ, wickedness still abounds (and it will continue so until the coming of Christ a second time), and therefore, the Gospel is a failure. "Many are called, but few are chosen." The doctor who wanted to show his smartness said to the minister: "You parsons have been preaching for hundreds of years, and there is as much wickedness as ever." "True," said the minister, "you doctors have been doctoring for a thousand or more years, and there is as much sickness as ever." But medicine and Christianity are both progressing, even though the doctor and minister in the incident mentioned may both have spoken the truth, a fact which we may well remember and rejoice in during these Christmas times. It was a long and likely perilous journey undertaken by the wise men, but nevertheless they found Him whom they sought. And when they found Him, what was the result?

I. They worshipped Him. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down and worshipped him." That is the idea. The truly great and wise are the worshippers of Jesus. We may well join in this worship. The position of these men indicated humility. "Fell down" signifies humility. Without it there can be no proper worship, either of the Child or the King Jesus. He was full of this grace Himself. His worshippers are likewise. It was a memorable spectacle, that of these men falling down at the feet of an infant. They are only the first

fruits; the harvest is to follow. The princes of this world are to bow before Him. Now they make obeisance to one another. They worship success; they respect station and pomp. But the mighty ones of the earth are to learn that there is something better than success and nobler than rank.

“The rank is but the guinea stamp;
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.”

Rich men are learning to acknowledge the greatness of the babe born in the stable. But as yet the number is small. They must worship Christ. The whole world must worship Him if they would learn the lesson of the day which is celebrated as the anniversary of His birth. “As surely as the wise men went to Bethlehem to worship the mystery of the Incarnation, the wise men of the future will follow in their track.” This does not necessarily mean learning. The men of the East were not wise simply because of their learning, but for the reason that they came seeking Jesus. Seek Him earnestly, seek Him reverently, and when you have found Him, as you surely will, worship Him.

2. They presented gifts. “And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold and frankincense, and myrrh.” Do you see? It means Christian giving. To whom? To Jesus. The Gospel breaks the heart, then the band on the pocket-book is also broken by a willing hand, and the contents poured out for Him; for His sake. The Christmas card is all right. It signifies. But the hungry man would enjoy a beefsteak more. The barefoot child might admire the printing and the beautiful design, but at the same time cry: “My feet are cold.” A friend writes: “Xmas cards are very well, but I was never in much favor of them. Something more substantial I think preferable, especially to those in the humble walks of life.” Wise man.

Do you hear, ye rich men? Gold! gold! gold! and frankincense and myrrh. Here is the culmination of re-

ligion, the union of devotion and service. The angels, according to the vision, have wings (your attention, any who may be in doubt); but underneath the wings they have hands. They have wings wherewith to cover themselves in the Divine Presence; they have hands wherewith to make themselves useful in the Divine service. The Wing and the Hand; godliness first, usefulness afterwards. "They fell down and worshipped Him"—there you see godliness; "and when they had opened their treasures they presented Him gifts"—there you see usefulness. Some Christians seem to have wings but no hands; others seem to have hands but no wings; but the perfect Christian, like the perfect angel, has wings and hands; wings to join in the worship of God; hands to serve in the Church of God!

Finally, they were guided by a star. "And lo, the star, which they saw in the East, went before them until it came and stood over where the young child was." Jesus is now the star. The bright and morning star. Let the light of that star lead you where He would have you go. I quote from The Observer of the 12th instant:

"He gave the star of love to shine,
Through all this earthly night,
'Love one another,' was the theme,
He taught as best and right.
'If to the least of these you give
Meat, drink and clothes,' said He,
'Then your reward shall be the same
As if ye gave to Me'

"Don't look on high for Bethlehem's star.
You'll never find it there,
But go to some lone widow's cot,
And hear her humble prayer.
Then from your storehouse (God has filled)
Take from shelf and jar
And in those thankful eyes you'll see
The light of Bethlehem's star."

This is "homemade poetry," but it is to the point. With it I conclude. Blessed Christmas and happy New Year to all my readers. God be with you. Amen.

IT IS THE LORD WHO HELPS.

"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." I. Samuel 7:12.

We will open the service to-day by singing hymn No. 708 in the Methodist hymnal, and which may be found, also, in any other hymn book.

"Remark, my soul, the narrow bound,
Of the revolving year;
How swift the weeks complete their round !
How short the months appear !

"So fast eternity comes on—
And that important day,
When all that mortal life hath done,
God's judgment shall survey.

"Waken, O God, my careless heart,
Its great concern to see,
That I may act the Christian part,
To give the year to thee."

"Twenty years before the event recorded in the text the Israelites had suffered a great defeat at the hands of the Philistines, over whom they now have obtained a great victory. To connect the two lessons of these two events, Samuel, the prophet, set up a memorial stone, calling it Eben-ezer, the stone of help. Into the first battle the Israelites had entered with great dependence upon the ark. They sent and brought the ark from Shiloh. But the ark did not save them. The Lord did not give His glory to another, not even to that which represents His presence and His fidelity. In this latter case they fell to prayer, for the Philistines were upon them again. They had the good sense and piety to repent of their former blunder. They were victorious. Samuel said, when he erected his Eben-ezer monument, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.' There was a sense in which the very defeat to which the Lord had left them in the first instance had been a help to them. It showed them

the folly of depending upon the mere externals of religion, and the necessity of serving the Lord faithfully in spirit and in truth. The prophet desired to keep before the eyes of the people a visible reminder of the defeat and the victory, and the lessons which they taught. He said also, Hitherto. The word looks backward and forward. Retrospective, it is gratitude; prospective, it is caution. Will He help us always? How shall we keep that mighty help?"—Dr. Deems.

By belief and trust in the Word of God. His promises are not like man's. When He says, I am with you even unto the end of the world, my conviction is, He will be.

The old earth has made its annual run, coming in Friday night to the station on time, but tarried not a second. The same track has been in use for these yearly journeys since God stretched it in space. It has stood the voyages of time, showing the perfection of Him who controls. The train was full one year ago yesterday; it is full to-day. Some who started with us have gone into the sleeping department and are resting without disturbance. One father said: "Oh, that Mary would come back, just for a little while, that I might take her once more in my arms, and tell her how her father loved her." And yet, Mary, sweet girl, is far better off than they who are conscious that the world still moves. They are not far from us. We look up at the stars and think they have gone up there. No, they are here. Their bodies are lying, not in the cold, but in the warm earth. Not subject to pain, sorrow, trouble. Under the violets and roses they sleep. Precious thought, they are still with us. It is true we are sad when they say "Good night," and enter the sleeper. But then we know that some time, though of the hour we are ignorant, the old planet will run into the round house exactly on schedule, but for the last time. Then they who are sleeping will awake, and the others who have not slept will be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; and the conductor will stand

with outstretched hands, saying: "Come, ye blessed of my Father and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Train has come to a full stop. Every passenger happy, for the journey is made. God Almighty kept His hand on the lever, and His only begotten Son was in charge of the train. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Of course Jesus has paid the fare. We hold a through ticket, if we believe it. No stop-over permitted. While the service is magnificently and perfectly equipped, it is really a work train. And as there are many sick, troubled and pain-stricken passengers, those who are not in such condition are expected to minister in such ways as will cause the ones in trouble to forget their pain and sickness. The conductor, the Great Physician, is always on duty; but much is to be done, and He gives explicit directions. It is night. One passenger has taken a berth for a short nap. All is quiet. He cannot sleep. He hears the swish! swish! swish! of the blood as it pours back through a leaking valve of the heart; and he thinks, Am I about to enter the sleeper for good. He prays as did the poor man, in the McAuley Mission, who came in response to the invitation that Jesus would save him, "O God, give me sleep." And directly it seems that the prayer will be answered. Tired nature sinks into the arms of gentle slumber, and in the morning he awakes refreshed by the few hours of unconsciousness. The sun is shining brightly around his berth; he hears the voice of a faithful one preparing the morning meal; the swishing noise has subsided, and he rises from the place of recent repose and renewed strength for the work of the day, and says: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." And thinking of the morning when the eternal day has dawned for all on board, either asleep or awake, he sings with the

Psalmist: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Directly there is handed him a note from another invalid passenger, which reads: "He asked me to write and give you his sympathy and love; and he said your words were to him more dear than any ever said of him and his work before," and the writer concluded: "Believe me one who has faith in your faith." Lord make me worthy of this confidence reposed in me by a fellow man. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us;" for without His aid these things could have never been. And that faith which we all need is the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. The same faith that Christ had is ours as a gift if we want it. And by its exercise we may ever have the help of which the text speaks—the faith of Jesus.

Trembling, timid, Christian passenger on the train to eternity; poor, weak, wavering sinner, let me point you this day, of the New Year, to the promises of God, and cry: "All you need is there." I know it, or I wouldn't say it. His word is inexhaustible. His law and statutes are perfect and plain. The word quivers with tenderness. Wait on Him; commit your way unto Him; delight yourself in Him, and the desires of your heart He will give you. Try it. Be somebody for God and humanity. Here is a promise: "I will make thee a blessing." That is His promise as to what we may be to others as the world goes round and round. No Christian can be selfish. Let us make this a new heaven and a new earth where dwelleth righteousness. Let us be reflectors. Patient and tranquil, standing before Him, ready to do or suffer His will, will make this the gladdest, happiest year of all our lives. "My soul, wait thou only upon God; my expectation is from Him."

Don't make any new resolutions. Do like the religious Conferences, Conventions, etc., which pass the same ones at every annual session. Read over the old ones and get about keeping some of them. I shall not turn over a new

leaf; neither would I advise it to others. Claim the promises of God and with His aid you may make the old leaf, all blotted with resolutions never kept, white as snow. And then you may write: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

The editor of *The Observer* has said I may have another year's engagement. How precious is the thought that here, in the providence of God I am permitted to preach. In no perfunctory manner I ask the prayers of my readers. Help me to be a blessing to you. Write to me when you wish. Tell me anything that would have a tendency to help humanity, the cause of God.

When you pray, sometimes "remember me." I am sure many do. What a blessing! What a blessing the work has been to the one who has been called to conduct it.

Don't be uneasy about the old planet running off its track. You keep in line with the same precision that it does and you will be certain to make the journey without danger or misfortune. I am not caring so much for a triumphant death as I am to live a triumphant life. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," was the evidence of a victory in life.

The New Year is before us. For all it should mean faith in Christ. To many it will fetch sorrow, disappointment, reverses; to many gladness, fortune, earthly happiness. To many death. But we may meet even what might seem the worst possible fate and still have it spoken the best year of our lives. But howsoever it be, God leads. He has always been the help. I asked at the beginning, in the words of another: "How shall we keep that mighty help?" In conclusion, I answer in the words of another, one who knows: "Follow Me."

"We know not what lies before us
In months that are to come,
Nor into what varied texture
Our web of life shall run,
But we ask Thee to guide each thread
Until the whole be wrought

To complete the perfect pattern
Of thine own perfect thought.

"We discern not in our blindness,
The seeming good from ill,
So we ask Thee, Heavenly Father,
To work Thy perfect will :
And we lean, with a child-like trust,
On Thy strong arm of love,
Assured that Thy loving kindness
Will lead to Thy home above,
For the pillar of fire by night
And the pillar of cloud by day,
Shall be our guiding light,
Shall be our constant stay."

OPTIMIST VS. PESSIMIST.

An optimist is one who holds that all events are ordered for the best. Pessimist would mean the reverse. "Neither character is right standing alone." The first stands upon such Scriptural matter as "all things work together for good to them that love God." It is not possible for us to believe that this passage is of universal application. There are things going on every day that are only portentous of every day evil. We are not going to attempt any discussion. We steer clear of the domain of mysteries and metaphysics, and stand in the sunlight of God's great love, and try to believe that even out of the strife, discord and rottenness generally to be found in the affairs of our beloved country—and notwithstanding that men who all their lives have stood high in the Church are proving false to trusts reposed in them by the public—God will yet fetch order and justice to such as have been wronged, and let good come, even from the evil with which we are cursed.

An esteemed personal correspondent in a recent letter says, and pertinently at that: "Take out of the Bible all that would be now called pessimism and what would be

left in it?" It would likely be in the condition of the Duke's Bible who invariably had everything cut out not in accord with his character and life. And one morning, in response to the Duke's impatient question:

"Hans, why don't you read?"

Came the quick reply from Hans: "Please your honor, it's about all cut out."

The Bible predicts perilous times, when iniquity shall abound, when men shall become lovers of self, when the love of many shall wax cold and when the preachers declare against such evil as predicted by the Bible and warn all of the disastrous results which are sure to follow, somebody is ready to cry out: "Pessimist!" If this kind of sermons are not in accord with the truth, then our Savior must come in for His share of censure as a pessimist. For example, just get your Bible and read His verdict after dissecting a human heart. What did He call it, and what did He say it was filled with? To dwell upon such things would be called pessimism.

Optimist vs. Pessimist. My friend who writes me that "neither character is right standing alone" is correct. It's best to take middle ground. Pessimism does not mean that all events are ordered for the worst, but that all are not for the best. When the ship is in the fog it is best to sound the fog horn. It wards off danger. The old ship of Zion and the ship of State are caught some time in the fog. Is the horn needed? Is there a fog in North Carolina to-day, or only a light mist that will soon pass away? I leave it with you.

WALKING WITH GOD.

"And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5:24.

Careful reading of the fifth chapter of Genesis will prove both interesting and instructive. The average reader has probably not noted the fact that Adam, who

was the first, lived to see the day of Lamech, the ninth patriarch, and at his death (Adam's) there were still living Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah and Lamech. All of these patriarchs, except Enoch, lived to be very, very old men, the majority over nine hundred years. While it is true their days extended into many centuries, it is not recorded that they were distinguished by any special usefulness to their generation, more than they "begat sons and daughters," and then died. The distinguishing mark in their existence is that they were permitted to live a long time without being of much account in mitigating the fearful evils then existing, or even attempting to do so. Reading this chapter is like walking through a cemetery, and noting the epitaphs on the stones, though in these cases the historian disposes of his subjects with unusually brief remarks. They lived; "begat sons and daughters;" they died. There he leaves them, without attempt to put polish on their lives, or even hint at their final destiny after death. The monotony or sameness of expression is relieved by the disposition made of Enoch. He "walked with God; and was not; for God took him." "And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty and five years." His departure from earthly scenes being next to that of Adam. The world, in which Enoch lived and which is also our present dwelling place, is taught by this good man's life:

I. That a long earthly existence is not necessary to a man's becoming great. Enoch was a great man because a good man. Greatness and goodness are synonyms. He lived but a short time, compared with his contemporaries; only 365 years. It is said that he lived sixty and five years and begat Methuselah, after which he went on being faithful to duty, domestic and religious, and walked with God 300 years. It was a most remarkable life. Though called away when in the prime and strength of manhood, the historian gives to him a testimony denied any one of his ancestors, and which, for all generations

to come, will be read, studied and used in demonstration of the fact that walking with God, and leaving footprints in the sands of time, which others may see and follow for their good, are not dependent upon a life of many years.

2. The life of Enoch teaches that man is not the creature of circumstances. That with God they may rise above contaminating influences, and live in an atmosphere purified by a close association with God. The times in which Enoch lived are characterized in the Bible as being fearful in the extreme. The description is as follows: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Gen. 6:5-6. Fearful pictures. Everything about man was wicked. The very fountain head, from which flowed his ideas, imagination, conception, perception, was a reservoir of corruption; and God was grieved that he had even made man, and because His Spirit had ceased to strive with him, He determined to destroy him from the face of the earth. In this dark night of sin Enoch was the one star that shone upon the blackness with which he was surrounded; he was the one creature whose life was as a flower blooming in a wilderness; and notwithstanding the adverse environment, he kept close to his Maker, rose above the baneful surroundings and "walked with God." Men, in this generation of churches, religious societies, the revealed Word of God, hundreds of beneficent resources, refuse to become the followers of the Lord, and give as their reason that it is impossible for them to maintain a correct life. The excuse is not tenable. It is an evasion, a subterfuge. They refuse to walk with God because, like the majority of people in Enoch's day, they prefer sinful indulgence to religious consecration and devotion to God. No doubt Enoch had his temptations, but he endured them; and we have the same power of resistance. "Blessed is the man

who endureth temptation." Man's extremity is God's opportunity. God is ever close to the one who realizes his danger and calls for help. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord has the promise given him that he shall be saved. I have heard such expressions: "A railroad man, a lawyer, a doctor, a clerk, etc., cannot become Christians. Their circumstances are against such a life." Thousands of these very professions and callings are walking with God; others may do likewise. Enoch had no Bible, and living in what is called the darkest age of the world, his life was a demonstration of what a man may be, who without qualification or reservation, puts himself in the hands of God. Such a man was Enoch; such a man you may be. God then becomes to us as a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. There is no danger when we take Him as a companion. He is the best friend I have ever tried. He will be your best friend. Do not grieve Him by resisting His Spirit.

3. The life of Enoch teaches that we may know when we are pleasing God. "Before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God." How precious is the testimony, when we know that we mean to do the correct thing and are striving for the good of our fellow; that we desire to be helpful, and that our words, written or spoken, and sympathy, and all these things, are appreciated. But how great the consolation of a conscience void of offense, and which is but the mouthpiece of Him in whom we live and move, telling us He is pleased. Enoch had this testimony. It is not likely it came to him in any miraculous manner. He knew that he pleased his Creator because they walked together daily; communed with each other, and between them there was no discord, but perfect agreement. For how can two walk together all the time except they are agreed? How sweet to me the thought, and not alone to me, but to all who profess His name, that He is pleased. We may make mistakes, be misunderstood, called out of order, not loyal; and even by

some, who should be better disposed to their fellows, cursed and anathematized. These things are painful and cause us to be troubled about many things; but if God be for us, if we are on His side and are walking with Him, and have the knowledge that He is pleased, why need we fear? No necessity; everything will come right. Of this we should assure ourselves that if we are pleasing God we are on the right track. I love to please my friends, my loved ones; but the knowledge that I am pleasing God is above all things incomparably delightful. There are other lessons that Enoch's life teaches; we will reserve them for a future day. But the little girl said: "And Enoch walked with God, and kept on walking with God, and one day he got so far from the sinful world that God just opened the beautiful gate and said, 'Come, Enoch, come home with me.'" "And he was not; for God took him." That was the end of it. He never saw death. Glorious translation! Dr. Clarke, commentator, sees no reason why there should not be many more exactly like it, if men did not receive the grace of God in vain. Neither do I.

Have you been straying from the fold? Are you now lacking in pure religious enjoyment? Is the Bible a dull, uninteresting book? Are the services at the sanctuary distasteful? Do you spend much time in serious meditation? In prayer? Is it not well this Sunday morning that you make careful examinations and see just what relation your present life indicates you are sustaining to God? If not, you need to mend your ways. Let us sing and pray.

"O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed
How sweet their memory still,
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,

Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only Thee.

"So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame ;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb."

WAITING ON THE LORD.

"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." Psalm 27:14.

David at different times was guilty of very abominable conduct, and the fact that the mistakes of the great men are not covered from the view of the reader is in evidence that there is a chance for any man who, as David, will confess his mistakes, repent of the same and stay quit. This thing of continued wrong doing, however, is not what God desires to see in His creatures. One of the worst sins, for which mankind, generally, can be tried and convicted, without the jury leaving the box, is the violation of that law commanding the cultivation of patience. Never in the history of this country has the law of patience been so flagrantly violated as within the past three months by the American people in their eagerness to force the President of these United States to go to war, when in no condition to meet a formidable enemy. They were actually incensed at the Chief Executive's patience, but he waited; and in doing so the Lord strengthened his heart; and the Department of War had the opportunity to strengthen the coast defenses and thoroughly equip the army and navy. That is what the Psalmist means when he says: "Wait on the Lord." There is no doubt that the Lord's way is the best, though, ordinarily speaking, the majority think otherwise. In this Psalm the writer prays to be delivered from his enemies, yet is confident that though an host should encamp against and

war be brought upon him, that his heart will not fear. It is likely that at the time of the text he was being put to the sword by King Saul; but, notwithstanding, he believed to see the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the living; and this thought nerved him. Had it not been for faith in God, when contending with his enemies, he would have proven no good. He would have fainted and the enemy, of course, been victorious over him. He was in much trouble, and his heart needed strengthening for the conflict; this he knew would come to him, for there was one on his side, greater than any enemy. Therefore he waited on the Lord. It is a pleasure the conservative element, which usually is sufficient to check undue precipitancy in matters of much import as relating to the weal of the people, enjoys in realizing that at our head stands one who, notwithstanding clamor, continued to carry out with patience what he deemed best for the people whom he serves. And for this reason God must be with us, for surely He stands for the right. The people will not faint in the fight; and if carried in His name, humanitarianism, then His side will be our side and the result easy to forecast. During the war between the States an ardent Christian gentleman said to President Lincoln: "I trust, sir, in this war, that the Lord is on our side." The pious man raised his eyes in horror when the matter-of-fact Abraham replied: "That is not what most concerns me in the fight." But the look of horror disappeared as the President concluded: "The question with me is are we on the Lord's side?" So, then, if it's the Lord's side, His battle, which the American people are going to fight, there can be no doubt. We will not all go to the war with Spain. But let it not be forgotten that in the everyday conduct of life's warfare there come moments requiring as much refinement of courage as is necessary in sanguinary warfare. Then in all of its vicissitudes, as the winds blow hard and temptations appear, suggesting the putting aside of the Christian armor, remember your captain; "be

of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart." The preacher, the teacher, men and women, in every relation of the battle, find themselves to be weak and fainting. These direful consequences result from a lack of patience. Don't be in a hurry. Take it easy. "Wait on the Lord," and never give way in the presence of any human to the awful sin of impatience. God is going to do his part, and His goodness will be seen in the land of the living. The Psalmist exhorts that all would chisel themselves after His model in the matter of patience. It doesn't make a particle of difference what the cause may be that produces fretting and worry. Down with it! The habit is sinful. It distresses yourself as well as all others with whom you come in touch. "Wait, I say, on the Lord." That is, act like a man. One who does not fear to do anything but evil. As you wait on the Lord remember that it does not mean sitting at home or by the roadside waiting for the coming of the Lord while the grass is choking the corn growth and the bugs eating the potato vines. It means to hope, to believe, work and fear not. They that wait upon the Lord shall never be confounded. Religion, the whole of it, is taking God at His word. No man who disobeys or fails to obey the Word can be said to trust in God. The poorest excuse, to be called a creature of God, is that man or woman continually making exhibition of their lack of trust by complaint with environment and impatient in even the small details incident to life. The heart has no strength, no character, no courage. It never waits on the Lord. The winds of adversity blow harder than you have the ability to stand. You are mad because you sleep on a cot. Because you are not living in a palace and surrounded by a retinue of servants. Because you don't make \$100 per month when probably you are not worth \$10. Impatient in all things, and for this reason you find nothing good in life. What a battle it is to fight. And you make such a poor soldier. Why? You are not following the captain. Not waiting

on Him. Not taking nor obeying His order. Whatever be your trouble, take it to Him. Go on with your work; lovingly, patiently, faithfully. "Wait, I say, on the Lord." It will all come right, and before the end the cross you carry will fade out of sight, and the crown of the hero or heroine be yours even before the day of final reward.

A LIFE TIME WAR.

"Fight the good fight of faith." I. Timothy 6:12.

Some preachers, and others folks, who don't know any better, will tell you that it is easy to be a Christian. According to my experience and observation it takes grit to make a never-flagging soldier of the cross. To be a Christian is more difficult than sawing wood or fighting Spaniards. Without faith it is impossible to please God. And to have a perfect faith, in these fast times, fighting is essential. The soldier who, a few days ago, refused to accept a copy of the New Testament, when offered him by the Bible distributing committee, because it contained nothing in it on war, was a little off. Had he turned to Matt. 10th and Luke 12th he would have found words like these: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay; but rather division.

"For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

"The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law."

Of course the war here described is of a different character from that to which the young soldier referred; but it is a war more cruel than the sanguinary. The words of the Savior here quoted were true at the time of utterance, and after nineteen centuries, nearly, of Gospel

preaching which is intended to establish peace on earth, it is to be regretted that they are not one whit less true to-day. And because of the truth contained therein is one of the urgent reasons why Christians should fight the good fight of faith. This fight implies severe and varied conflicts. Among them we note:

1. That at times it becomes necessary for a Christian soldier to fight his own people. "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." This is a fearful truth. I know a woman of rare intelligence and culture. She has passed the limit and is living on borrowed time. Her desire it to do good and be faithful; but her own children stand in her way, and actually make sport of her religious inclinations. And because she desires to give of her means to those who have been less fortunate her children tell her that she is non compos and threaten to have her legally so adjudged, and a guardian appointed to look after her estate. We have seen families divided and a great stew in consequence of religious life on the part of one or more members of the family.

2. It becomes necessary for the consecrated preacher and layman to engage in conflict with his own church when he sees clearly the tendency to extreme worldliness. Here are some words recently written to me by a layman. And anticipating that some church brother, who easily gets hot under the collar when the church is arraigned and calls him who sees the spots, wrinkles and blemishes "a crank," I will say that my correspondent is not that kind of a machine, but a consecrated layman belonging to "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He writes as follows:

"Fashion, worldliness, love of money, dependence on rich church members, 'special attractions' in the way of pipe organs, orchestras, operatic music without the spirit of true worship, pride of denomination, extravagance in church buildings, rhetoric in the pulpit, ecclesiastical cowardice in Church courts, 'the cooking stove apostacy,' and

lastly, infidelity, open or half concealed, are some of the evils that have taken root in the Church, that have found rich soil there, and are growing and spreading. ‘An enemy hath done this.’ It is impossible to ever root out the tares from the wheat, but ‘the children of the kingdom’ shall not shut their eyes to the fact that ‘the children of the Wicked One’ are all about them in the same field. Not until ‘the harvest’ will they ever be separated. If the ‘mystery of iniquity’ did ‘even now work’ in Paul’s day, what must it be doing now? I often think of the passage you quote: ‘When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?’ I am trying to be constantly looking for Him, and I know I will be glad to see Him when He does come, if that day should be in my life time. These present day evils in the Church confirm the conviction in my mind that we are to-day somewhere (perhaps in the beginning, perhaps far along—I am no date-setter) in that time which Paul prophesied of: ‘That day shall not come except there come a falling away first.’ II. Thess. 2:3. Christians to-day are trying to do what God says in His word is impossible. Or at least many, perhaps the vast majority of them, are. They are trying to pull up the tares by the roots. Their plan of campaign is to abolish the liquor traffic, the theatres, the dives of great cities, the dens of iniquity, etc. They are trying to convert the whole world. If I understand God’s Word aright, soldiers of the cross are rescuing parties. They can, trusting in the great Captain of their salvation, save many a lost man and woman from out of the world, but they need never expect to convert the world. Not while the Evil One is still loose, and directing all the forces of darkness. So when a Christian Endeavor Society takes for its motto: ‘North Carolina for Christ,’ or when a world-wide missionary alliance takes as a battle-cry: ‘The World for Christ,’ it is rushing headlong into danger without orders; indeed, it is going into the warfare in direct opposition to the plan of cam-

paign the Lord of Hosts has laid down. ‘Christ for North Carolina’ or ‘Christ for the World’ is better, for He died to furnish a salvation sufficient to save all. But the army that sets its heart on a complete world victory is doomed to disappointment and is wasting its energies. ‘As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man cometh;’ ‘that day shall not come except there come a falling away first,’ instruct us that not until Christ Himself comes will evil be swept from the earth. May that day come quickly.” None but persons who are actually blind, or they who shut their eyes to things that are not done in a corner, can fail to note the impending dangers, stated clearly in the foregoing correspondence, that menace the Church in her spiritual power. And because of the truth, it behooves the men and women who really fear God to speak often to one another, and to continue to fight for the faith that was first delivered to the saints. If the falling away, of which Paul speaks, is on us is it not evidence that the day is near at hand? It is not the sins of the notoriously wicked on the outside, but the flagrant transgressions of those on the inside, that, to-day, are in fulfillment of the Scriptures which prophesy the condition of the world prior to the coming of the Son of God. If you want to know its condition in the day of Noah read Genesis, 6th chapter. Compare it with the present day state of affairs. What is the difference? I do not expect to be living when Christ comes, but I want to be ready for it, whether living or resting in my grave. And to be ready, according to plain statements of Jesus Himself, and the Apostolic writings, is going to keep me fighting the good fight of faith unto the end.

The Apostle Paul, standing on the apex of his religious experience, though at the time in prison at Rome, sends these words to Timothy: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” He was ready for his departure. In his writings he spared neither friend nor foe. He poured hot shot into all who were

disobedient to the faith; and it made no difference where they held their church membership. Christian warfare is no play soldiering. There is mighty little dress parade in it. Sometimes I am tempted to surrender. It seems like fighting in the dark. But somebody writes to me and gives me encouragement. And the decision is formed, with resolution, to keep up the fight notwithstanding the powers of darkness and the strength of the Evil One. Jesus Christ must be the stronger. He will carry us through. Let us never turn loose; but having proved Him in all things, we will hold fast, and fight the good fight of faith. In "that day," the appearing of Christ, we will get the crown. But doesn't the Christian fighter get many a crown even during the war? It is hard fighting, but it will soon be over; and then, home, sweet home.

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR.

Flies are a very great pest. In my house we keep them at a distance by the use of screen wire. I sit on the inside, smile at them on the outside, and face a frowning world. Occasionally when the door opens one or more dart in, for they are persistent. But with care they may be effectually barred. It is likewise that we combat the fiery darts of the wicked. By putting up the screen—the armor of God. But don't forget it must be the whole, and not a part of the armor. There can be no doubt that we are in the midst of evil and perilous times. The Church of Christ is being assailed. The members need protection from the foe. There is a perfect and sure defence. Here it is:

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Eph. 6:13.

The ancient warrior wore a girdle about his loins. This was to increase his strength; that he might be the better

able to withstand the onslaught of the enemy. So the Apostle Paul, who was so familiar with military figures of speech, and which, by the way, is pertinent at the present time, wrote the early Christians to "stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." How essential to the success of the Christian that his life be truth itself. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Luke 2:35. While the boys are going to a foreign land to fight the Spaniards, remember that the home guard must be daily fighting the devil; and "spiritual wickedness in high places." Another part of the armor is the breast plate. This was needed to protect the vital organs about the chest, the heart and lungs especially. Therefore the Apostle instructs Christians in these words: "And having on the breastplate of righteousness." No warrior bold needed in the cruel war the breastplate more than does the professed Christian. No man can see God whose heart is not pure. This is a day of impure language, books and papers. Yellow journalism is not confined to Northern cities. It is in North Carolina. I read the other day in a paper published at the capital, a detailed account of the fall of a young woman, that to be read by many young people, would, it strikes me, prove pernicious in the extreme. Bad language, improper articles in the press, unwholesome books, all come as a result of more or less heart contamination. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. This is divine language. How important then that the heart be kept with all diligence. It can be safe only by having on the breastplate of righteousness. "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." These words refer to the sandals worn. Light in weight, the soldier was enabled to move rapidly. So we need to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us," in order that in our own lives the teaching in the following beautiful words may be manifest: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings."

of good things." My reader, do you know that you are thus shod? Are you carrying to others glad tidings? In service for the master we forget all time and care. To be a faithful soldier of Jesus is what I pray you may be.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith." What would a soldier be worth in the war now raging if lacking faith in the righteousness of the cause for which he fights? But I am inclined to believe, and must write it, that now, according to much evidence as appearing to me, the shield of faith is rarely worn by those who profess to follow the Captain of our Salvation. I have read, carefully and prayerfully, the article in a recent issue of *The Observer*, contributed by "H. A. B." It was suggested to him by *The New York Sun's* editorial, "The Waning of Evangelicalism," which was published in *Sunday's Observer*. "H. A. B." names his contribution "The Decay of Faith." He makes a hit at the display of fashion as seen in the usual Sunday service. He thinks the attire, especially of the women, is hardly in keeping with apostolic injunction that it be modest. He refers to the cooking stove as a modern adjunct of the new church building. He closes with these words:

"Is it possible that the Church, even in the South, is becoming too fin-de-siecle? Is the Church in any danger by reason of the decline of faith?"

If I am to be a part of the jury on the case I answer the above questions without hesitation in the affirmative. Pride of denomination in the matter of church building has much to do with the costly buildings which are called, by many of the poor, "The Rich Man's Church." I heard a poor woman excuse her non-attendance on the ground that she was not able to dress in the fashion, and if she attended, the criticism of her dress was more than she could stand. They dressed too fine for her. The devil is getting in good work for himself in this respect. A young lady said her preacher talked Latin, and therefore, as she was not versed in that language, she had not much to en-

courage her attendance. So it is, that the church which is without spot, wrinkle or blemish, has not yet appeared on the scene. The spots and wrinkles are the outcome of the decay of faith. There was much more of true religion in the day before the advent of the big organ, orchestras, and other worldly appurtenances, which have been introduced into the modern church.

It may also be written as a ground for the decay of faith that the modern preacher in so many instances fails to properly build upon the foundation that has already been laid. Instead of "gold, silver and precious stones" in the church, we find largely, "wood, hay, stubble." The preacher who only preaches for popularity or to make a sensation, if possessed of conscience, should tremble for himself and hearers when reading words like these: "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." I. Cor. 3:13. He himself may come out saved; but what about his work? His people being burned? But the promise of reward is only to them whose work on the foundation shall abide. No doubt that much of the preaching of the day is due to the fact that the members of many congregations will not willingly hear the word, and the preacher is intimidated. What will be the feelings, though, of a minister at the judgment seat if he sees many of his church members placed on the left hand of the Judge? May he not well ponder these lines?

"When thou, my righteous judge shall come
To fetch thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?"

I was reading the other day to a church member the account of Samson slaying the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass. He smiled, and inquisitively said: "Now, John, do you believe that? Don't you know all that must be fiction?" This is a representative man. There are hundreds like him. They do not, as their fathers did,

wear the shield of faith. In a certain sense they are righteous, but, really, are not believers in the Bible. It doesn't tax my credulity a bit more to believe that Samson slew his thousand with the weapon mentioned than it does to believe that the dying of one man on the Cross brings life eternal to all who accept it. I believe the latter; therefore, to make my proposition good, I must believe the former. I propose to enter the valley holding before me the shield of faith. If thrown aside there is nothing to take its place. To complete the armor there are the helmet and the sword. So the Apostle speaks of the helmet of salvation. The helmet is intended to protect the head—the brain. There are more so-called religious folks with wheels in their heads than were in days of old, when people had faith in God. They need the helmet. "The sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God," is the weapon that always tells. Christians, many of them, cannot fence with it, because they do not know it, and do not believe it.

When I read to the brother that the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson, and that with the jaw-bone, he went and slayed a thousand men (Judges 15:15), I saw the smile. There are many who, like him, do not believe. And the worst of it is, they are in the Church. Yes, "H. A. B.," she is in danger; and it is in consequence of the decline or decay of faith. There is but one remedy for this decay: Put on the whole armor of God.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SOLDIER?

Endurance. "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier." II. Timothy 2:3. The inference is that good soldiers endure. This is a word of high meaning. "To bear with patience; to bear without opposition or sinking under the pressure." A man had a certain hope.

He thought he saw himself great in the eyes of the world. An eloquent orator, a wonderful lawyer, a rich merchant, a large manufacturer, a high steeple preacher, an honest politician; but he failed to reach the point, that, all the time, was not for him to attain; and instead of turning his hand or brain to something for which he was fitted, he went and took his place with the drones, or committed suicide. He had no patience to bear disappointment; he could not stand the pressure; and so became nothing, lived nothing, and died nothing. He could have been something had he possessed the power of picking himself up, and taking the next best thing; even if to its successful attainment endurance was necessary. Success in this world, from either a material or spiritual standpoint, is largely a question of ability to endure. I am very fond of reading the Epistles of Paul. They mark the man. Exemplify his character. No greater man ever lived. He reached a point when he could say: "For me to live is Christ." Every Christian should be able to say it; but they can't. Why? Because they cannot endure. Easy to give up; easy to lose hope; easy to say its vain to serve God. The men and women not willing to endure, though enlisted in the cause, have never gotten out of the awkward squad. Paul remained in this squad but a little while. When he enlisted he did so for the fight. I know Christian women to-day who lose their patience and fret over nothing to an extent that one, who may come in contact with them, will be filled with misery. And I know men who are no better than the women described. Pettish as spoiled children. Can't bear anything that may not be agreeable to a personal whim. They are not soldiers in the Lord's army; they never can be until they learn the lesson of patience, until they can stand any pressure. Some of them have been in the awkward squad for forty or fifty years. In fair weather they slip out and appear on dress parade, but they really are a burden to the army. They never will be good soldiers until the lesson

of endurance is absorbed and applied to every phase of disappointment and misfortune. They refuse to be drilled, and object to discipline. They wonder why they are called upon to be so severely afflicted, thinking that an injustice has been done them. They refuse to endure, and push from them the chalice of suffering, and decline to accept the chastening of the Lord; and thus bring discredit upon the religion professed. Miserable creatures! Miserable creatures! Not all are of this character, for some will see even an aureole of glory encircling the cup, which the coward refused; and will take it and drink, saying: "Not my will but Thine be done;" and God is glorified. Courage is as much an essential to make a good Christian soldier as to make a good one for the government.

What is all this endurance for? The Apostle answers in the 10th verse: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." That's the idea. Of course endurance is best for the person; but the motive with a soldier, a good soldier, is for his country's honor and the perpetuity of its principles of government. Right now there are many folks who want to be soldiers and whip out Spain in a few days. The impulse with some is, of course, patriotic; with others, self. But there is much pretension with many. And doubtless some are like the old negro who was heard praying and asking the Lord to come and get him and take him to glory. The next night, when a man, who had heard him expressing such readiness for translation, knocked at the door, and in response to the inquiry as to who was there, and what was wanted, replied that he was the Lord come to take Sambo to glory. There came back the immediate answer that Sambo didn't live there no longer. He had moved to another street. So there will likely be many who are now anxious for a fight, ready to decline at the decisive moment. The Christian endures the hardships incident to the spiritual warfare, that others may be benefited, and

that he may please his Captain who has so chosen him for His soldier. He will make sacrifices that he may bring comfort to others. The Apostle Paul had learned of the butcheries of Christians in Rome, and he went there at his peril to comfort them and urge all who were being persecuted to remain faithful to Jesus. He was soon in prison. This 2nd Epistle of Timothy is supposed to be the best he ever wrote. It is full of a sublime faith, and is touchingly pathetic. He is standing on the verge of eternity. He knows that from the prison he will go to the block. He does not say he wants to die. But he does say: "I am ready,.....the time of my departure is at hand." So every Christian should be ready any time. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Any man may know when he has done likewise. At this time Rome was steeped in sin. But Paul was full of the importance of enduring to the end. He wanted to see Timothy. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." He desired to see his friend once more. He wanted his cloak, his books, his parchment. The dungeon was likely damp and cold, and he needed comfort. And the thought of his books and papers show him still desirous of keeping himself a full man. When his head fell from the executioner's block and rolled in the duct at the feet of the rabble the spirit of the world's greatest Apostle went to God. When Jesus comes again it will be worth living right that we may get the privilege of shaking hands with Paul. But that's not the idea. He lived for others; so must we. And such a life is impossible without endurance of some kind. Why then am I a soldier? Not that I may reach heaven. That's not in my mind now. I am a soldier for Jesus that I may in my life exemplify the beauty of holiness and consecration to the service of the King, and that others may be benefited thereby. If the reader of The Observer or other person comes to my home my first thought is can I make an impression on that man that religion is a fact and something

to be desired above all things? My greatest desire is that men may be saved, and if by endurance I can bring about that end to any, I will endure. "Therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." I have long since concluded that the Bible contains a record of facts. There are some things which are puzzling and incomprehensible to my mind. These, as with dynamite, I have nothing to do. But such expressions as my text are clearly intelligible, and I grasp the meaning as presented and resolve to stamp it on my life. I had rather be a good soldier like Paul than to be an angel. He did much good in his life. If we pattern after him faithfully, so will we. Let life be of brief or long duration. A lady of Charlotte some time ago remarked to me that she, after reading my comments, did not think me an "up-to-date" preacher. The compliment may be, if one was implied, "doubtful;" as a friend of mine remarked, when I said, in asking him to endorse my note, that it was an honor I conferred on but few. But "up-to-date" or not, the preaching I would give is, that if we are crowned in this or the next life, it will be largely the result of faithfulness and endurance as relating to any of the trials, through which all are called, in every vocation, editors included, sooner or later, to pass. Paul lived and died years ago. But his principle and spirit are with us to guide our feet, hearts and minds in the correct channel. "Wherever the feet of them who published the glad tidings go forth beautiful upon the mountains, he walks by their side as an inspirer and a guide; in ten thousand churches every Sabbath and on a thousand hearts every day his eloquent lips still teach the Gospel of which he was never ashamed; and wherever there are human souls searching for the white flower of holiness or climbing the difficult heights of self-denial, there he, whose life was so pure, whose devotion to Christ was so entire, and whose pursuit of a single purpose was so unceasing, is welcomed as the best of friends."—Stalker. I want to be a minister with the same faith and courage. Every one is a minis-

ter for good or evil. Where do you stand? In your home or wherever you may read these lines, ask yourself: "Am I a good soldier of Jesus Christ?" If not a good one, then you are, necessarily, a bad one. Join the army and be a soldier right. I leave it with you.

WHERE SHALL REST BE FOUND?

"Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Jeremiah 6:16.

Plain question; plain answer. Get proper direction from a reliable source and go accordingly. There is no rest for the weary and the disturbed of earth only as compliance with the Lord's direction is met. "Thus saith the Lord." That's the talk of the One who always knows. For any question pertinent to the issues of life there is a never failing "Thus saith the Lord."

The editor of *The Observer*, last week, had an editorial: "Whither?" It was suggested by the preaching and antics of a couple of theological twisters. Following this, there was another editorial next day, concerning the reverend gentleman who had opened a dancing school in connection with his church, and again the editor asks: "Whither?" I was beginning to feel some uneasiness as to his equanimity; but Sunday's editorial, "Christianity and Skepticism," showed us that the world was "becoming better in the face of a growing tendency towards sensationalism in the pulpit." And thus *The Observer* still preaches "The Gospel of Hope," and is really not so much disturbed as to "Whither?"

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" is a maxim of divine excellence and philosophy. We need not be disturbed about the future. It is the present which makes history, divine and secular. Live to-day right, and the to-

morrow will be easily cared for, and will come laden with the blessings of God. Let us go forth to-day walking in the old paths, where is the good way, and rest, sweet rest, will be obtained. No doubt about that. The people to whom the prophet spoke these words were living unrighteous and wicked lives, and they said: "We will not walk therein." After thousands of years they have here, at this time, their counterparts. But this is the fact, there is no rest for the wicked; no solid, substantial enjoyment; for they know the pleasure of sin is but for a season, and the end is death. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The wicked say: "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." They know it. But in the old paths, "where is the good way," there is peace; keeping the heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Why not then walk in it? There is plenty of room. "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." Moses extended this invitation to Hobab. He declined to accept, but afterwards changed his mind and went with the people of God. So, reader, you may have done likewise. The way stands open and you are welcome in it. It's the good way that the old mother traveled, and when she was going to sleep she begged you to walk therein. Get in it to-day.

The sensational preacher wants to get up something new. He strikes matches and sends up balloons from the pulpit. He ought to go up in a balloon himself. He is the new man and a dangerous guide. No man ever floundered on the rocks who went in the old paths. Its the path that leads straight to and from the cross. Jesus came that He might destroy the works of the devil and to make a new heaven and a new earth where dwelleth righteousness. The metaphor of the text is suggestive, familiar and beautiful. Observe it.

"A traveller is going to a particular city; he comes to a place where the road divides into several paths; he is afraid of going astray; he stops short, endeavors to find out the right path; he cannot fix his choice. At last he

sees another traveller; he inquires of him, gets proper directions, proceeds on his journey, arrives at the desired place, and reposes after his fatigue. The soul needs rest; it can only find it by walking in the good way. It is the old way—the way of faith and holiness. Believe, Love, Obey; be holy and be happy.” Then sing:

“We are traveling home to God,
In the Way our fathers trod.”

OVERTAKEN IN A FAULT—WHAT TO DO.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Gal. 6:1.

“A once prominent citizen of Chattanooga published a remarkable card the other day in a local newspaper,” said Mr. G. L. Simpson, of Tennessee, to a Washington Post reporter:

“It reads something like this:

“I publicly proclaim myself a chronic drunkard, and warn all saloon-keepers that they violate their oaths by giving or selling me any spirituous liquors.”

“This card was signed with the author’s name. Until two or three years ago he had enjoyed the thorough respect and good will of the community, and his standing as a business man was high. He comes of good family, and has all the advantages of a liberal education. The drink habit got the upper hand of him, and he has been going down grade very rapidly. I do not think, however, that in going into print with a confession of his besetting sin that he has done a wise act. Aside from the shame and mortification it will cause his kindred, the printed notice can in no wise help him to reform. If he hasn’t strength of will sufficient to resist the tempter he will find some way to satisfy his cravings. There never was a time that a whiskey fiend couldn’t manage some plan whereby to satiate his thirst.”

The gentleman making the criticism on the card of the "whiskey fiend" may or may not be a Christian. However it be, I am sure, if the criticism was read by the man, so desperately attempting to break the chain which binds him, it would aid him little from a human standpoint. It looks to me like jumping on a fellow at the bottom of the hill with both feet. The card of the drunkard, was right in two particulars: 1st, It was justice to himself; 2nd, It was ditto to the saloon keeper. Now, saloon keeper, I am a wreck; a drunkard; and therefore more liquor will be my death. Don't you be an accessory When I ask for more refuse me. The argument made by the critic, that the poor inebriate's act, in going into print, on account of the mortification and shame coming to his kindred, was unwise, is thin as air. Had they not already suffered these things? His public use and abuse of liquor had, doubtless, made him a nuisance, and publishing the card might have given the kindred hope of his ultimate reformation. The man went rapidly to the bottom. He realizes it, and means to reach the summit again. But here comes a friend, and starts him down. For such friends, or men who are not willing to pull a man up hill, I want to sing a song. It is quoted from memory, and I may jumble the metre, but here it is:

"In this sensation century
 Good songs are very few,
 The words are little cared for,
 So the music it is new ;
 And subjects they are hard to find,
 But I have found one still,
 That's never push a man because
 He's going down hill.

"If e'er you meet an honest man
 Struggling on with fate,
 Don't speak words of discouragement
 Nor tell him 'tis too late;
 Don't sneer him as you pass him by
 But greet him with good will,
 And perhaps some day you'll meet that man,
 On the summit of the hill."

The poetry may not be ornate, but the philosophy is clear. I heard it twenty years ago. It has in it the religion of the Master, who teaches that we are to love one another. I have been near the bottom. Had my friends, all of them, given me that kind of treatment, likely, I would not be as far on the upward journey as, by their help, and the grace of God, I am. As I write to-night, I sing:

“I am trying to climb up Zion’s Hill,
For the Savior whispers, ‘Love Me;’
Though all beneath is dark as death
Yet the skies are bright above me.

“Then onward, upward, to the land,
To the land of joy and beauty,
Where all before shine more and more
As I near the Golden City.”

I heard something like that when going to the singing school. I don’t know whether it be good poetry, but it expresses my sentiments on the present occasion. Poor drunkard, struggling to break the chains of slavery, you need some one at your back to push you up, instead of pushing you down the hill. It is the place for those who are spiritual to restore such ones in the spirit of meekness.

The fact that the “whiskey fiend,” up to two or three years ago, was a thoroughly respected man and enjoyed the good will of the community, is why critics, even of the best class, should beware lest they also be tempted. My! My! What a difference between man and God as judges. I trust friends will go to the relief of the man who asked the saloon keeper to sell him no more drink; and that he may yet, in this life, stand on the summit of the hill. I am praying for him to-night. I would do more for him if I could. Drunkards have been saved, and this one may be. Few men are willing to acknowledge themselves to be drunkards. That this one has done so is evidence that for him the cloud that envelopes him may yet roll by. God save the men who want salvation. There is an outside and inside to every man. We often judge by the former;

but does not God act according to the latter? Reputation is not every time the index to character. Here is a man, like one drowning, grasping for a straw. He thinks of the press and its power and influence. He prints his brief but comprehensive card. I will be just enough to my fellow man, in whatever avocation or condition, to believe that the saloon keepers in Chattanooga will heed the appeal herein made. I think the wretched man was wise in availing himself of any aid that might help in his effort to get himself together once again. You say you would not have done thus and thus. Who are you? Wait until you have become a slave yourself and then you may do the same. "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

"We often say what we would do,
If we were so and so ;
But who can tell how we would act
With mind he cannot know ?

"We wonder why they will do this
And never will do that,
Appointing to ourselves the place
Of private autocrat."

NAAMAN'S BURDEN GONE.

"And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman, the Syrian." Luke 4:27.

Two weeks ago the subject of my remarks was "Naaman's Burden;" (and I stated in concluding the same, that at a subsequent time the manner in which he became rid of it would be considered.) The lesson to be read in connection with the text is the 5th chapter of 2nd Kings, beginning with the tenth and ending with the fourteenth verse. The words of the text were uttered by Christ in the famous discourse at Nazareth immediately after the temptation. He was talking in His home where He had

been brought up, but where His word was rejected, and an attempt made in the very beginning of His ministry to murder Him. He said to them that "no prophet is accepted in his own country;" and when He made the statement, that many lepers were in Israel in the days of Eliseus, but "none was cleansed save Naaman, the Syrian," "all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong." But He escaped their passion and passed on.

Why were not more lepers cleansed in the time of the prophet? Because they never sought the proper source. And Naaman, the one mentioned, came very near not receiving a cure by reason of his unreasonable pride, and a desire to have things done according to his own order, and not by the direction of God. Pride has sent more men and women to hell than any other agency of the devil. The desire to have one's own way, and the effort made to go in the same by so many children of men leads directly to death.

The Syrian free-booters, or companies, of which Naaman was the captain general, in one of their depredations across the border, had brought back captive out of the land of Israel a little maid. She was placed in the home of the commanding officer to wait upon his wife. She soon saw the great trouble in that heathen home; the fearful disease of leprosy resting upon her master. Having been properly trained in her own home in Israel she was acquainted with the Great Physician who is able to heal all diseases, even leprosy. So the little servant of God remarked to her mistress: "Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for He would recover him of his leposy." These words caused a flutter of excitement in the household and the King was apprised thereof. Immediately preparations were made in consequence of the words of the little child. A royal depu-

tation, carrying a fee amounting to probably sixty or seventy thousand dollars and a letter, is sent to the King of Israel. The latter is angry and takes it as a challenge to war on the part of the Syrian King. So he deported himself as kings and others do who become incensed with their neighbors and acted the fool generally. Elisha heard of the stew at royal headquarters, and at once sent a messenger to notify Naaman to come to him, "and he shall know there is a prophet in Israel." Directly Captain Naaman with horses, chariots, and a company or guard of honor, stood at the door of the house where dwelt the prophet, Elisha, the servant of God, may have heard the noise outside. He may have heard the commanding voice of the dashing army officer; the pawing of the horses' feet; the champing on the bits and all that is usually the accompaniment of a military dress parade. He was entirely unmoved by the same, and called his messenger boy, and directed him to tell the captain of the King's hosts to go and dip or wash himself in Jordan seven times. He was dirty with a loathsome disease and needed cleansing. But that didn't suit Mr. Naaman. There was not enough fuss made over him. He ought to have had a reception in keeping with his high position. He was not treated with proper respect, and no doubt felt much like serving a rule on the good prophet to show cause why he should not be attached for contempt of court. "I thought, he would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." He thought! That is the way of men. What business had he to think of any way except the one prescribed. But it is ever thus; and seldom is it found that man's way or thought is the God way and God thought. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." But his servants were wiser than he, and after presenting the case

in a proper manner at the last brought the leper to his senses. "If the prophet had bid thee to do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash and be clean." So he went in, and dipped the required number of times, and when he arose the last time, his burden was gone; he still had his silver and gold, for the cure was without money and price, "and he was clean." There's the whole business of it; and that's the way he got rid of his burden. Obedience is better than sacrifice. It must have been a royal jubilee of a time at Naaman's home when he returned to his wife and children with the one great burden that had rested on his greatness, gone forever. Washed off in the waters of the Jordan it had gone on to be swallowed up, and to never come back any more, in the bosom of the great deep. And the little maid no doubt rejoiced when she saw her lord coming back cured of the fearful disease. It was she who was the missionary in this case, and in the deliverance of Naaman may be seen an object lesson teaching what even a child may be permitted to do.

But the practical lesson remains. Here is a sinner carrying his burden of sin. He knows it is a burden. Time after time has he been so convinced. A fine, happy, go as you please, dashing, fascinating man, he is; but his burden? Why doesn't he off with it? He finds no real good in this kind of a life. And yet he continues in the way that sooner or later must lead to woe. Friends talk and persuade; but he is obdurate. It is too simple. I think that there is another way. I cannot understand. I cannot believe. There is the trouble. Unbelief is the crowning sin of this, as it has been, of every age. When Christ spoke to his own people, in his own home, he marvelling, wondered, because of their unbelief. It is the sin that refuses to admit the truth of divine revelation as it is in Christ. It is the oldest of all spiritual diseases. Society is full of it and would believe anything quicker than that Jesus will save you from your sins and thus rid you of

your greatest burden. The seat of the disease is in the head; for men say they will not believe anything they cannot understand. It also abides in the heart, for great as is this burden, men love sin and the indulgence of habits which the Bible condemns. Deal honestly with yourselves in respect to moral leprosy. Realize that you are a sinner and repent of the sin; believe on and in Christ; and salvation is certain. A radical cure is made if you will accept the treatment. Deal honestly with the religion of Christ and those who profess and live it. I do not attempt to explain it. The manner of being saved is the same as it has ever been. "Wash and be clean." Whosoever heareth and believeth; whosoever will forsake and confess their sin may be and are cured of the disease of moral leprosy; and the burden is gone. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man-his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then, baptized for the dead?" I Cor. 15:29. A lady reader, who reads closely both her Bible and Observer, has asked me to give my views on this passage of Scripture. It will require but a little space for me to do so. It is one of the few verses in the Bible without a parallel reference. Doctor Clarke, the eminent theologian and commentator, says: "This is certainly the most difficult verse in the New Testament; for, notwithstanding the greatest and wisest men have labored to explain it, there are to this day nearly as many different interpretations of it as interpreters." The reason why there are so many different interpretations is because there has been, I expect, no little beating around the bush. I can see nothing difficult in the pas-

sage. I write from the standpoint of a careful, . faithful reader of the Bible; basing my opinion on the face value of what I read. We all know that in the days of the Fathers and early Christian Church there were forms, rites and ceremonies of the rankest superstition. The Scripture means but one thing to me. In the earlier days live people received the sacrament or ordinance of baptism for persons who had died without it. Such a practice may have been carried on by some of the Corinthians, but not necessarily with the endorsement of the Apostle, though he may have been cognizant of it. The Apostle surely, without a shadow of doubt, believed in the doctrine of the resurrection. It had many opponents, and therefore Paul was ever preaching it. This chapter, the whole of it is devoted to the one all absorbing subject. He says: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" From this verse the legitimate conclusion follows that among those to whom he wrote and spoke there were some who denied the doctrine. "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised;" "and if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." They will never come forth if this doctrine is not true. He pursues the same line of argument when he quotes the passage: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" Why are they then baptized for the dead? This ceremony is all foolishness if the dead rise not. It was foolishness any way, but likely they believed there was some virtue in it, else it would not have been practiced. The wise and great in their attempt to interpret Scripture, which is perfectly plain on its face, thereby often perplex and puzzle the common people in the interpretation that common

sense would render. I never knew of any one baptizing another for the dead; but I do know of a preacher in North Carolina, who baptized a girl after she was dead. He was arraigned before the body to which he was accountable for his ministerial acts. I do not remember his plea in mitigation, though I know he promised not to do so any more. Had he baptized the dead girl's brother or sister in her stead he might have plead this passage in extenuation, though even then, this act would have been no less foolish than the other. And because the Apostle Paul wrote the words to the Corinthians is not evidence that the practice received his endorsement. And though he may have winked at, or knew of it, he uses the words only to show that though there was virtue in the ceremony, it was without profit, if the dead rose not. He carries out the same idea in the following verse: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." The words "beasts at Ephesus" may be a figure having reference to his trials and conflicts in general, as a consequence of his faith; for we know preaching of the same made for him enemies everywhere. Now what advantage was all this to him or what will it be to those who think like him, if there be no truth in the great fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion? Why says he, "to-morrow we die;" therefore, avoid the cross, the conflicts, the trials; and "let us eat and drink." Have a good time; instead of being Christians who must bear the cross, we will be Epicureans; get all the sensual pleasures possible, for soon, we will make our exit, from the stage and all will be over forever. But for this doctrine, of which Christ is the first fruits, we would never have had the plain teaching that the greatest of all the preachers of the cross has left us. My view then of the passage is exactly the same as any ordinarily intelligent and careful reader of the Bible would give; that there has been a time, in the early days of

the Christian dispensation, when live people were baptized for the dead, which had died without receiving this sacrament and that a reading of contemporaneous history would prove that such a practice prevailed. That it may have had ecclesiastical sanction, but not necessarily divine approval, any more than a great many practices of this age, carried on in the name of Christ.

Superstition has, from the beginning, been an accompaniment of religion; and in no small measure, in many places, it still holds. This is a fact known to all people who think; and much of it, as a matter of history, is recorded in the Bible. The text is a sample. A Presbyterian preacher and friend whose attention I called to the text, said he had never noticed it before.

COMFORTING WORDS.

The future life is a question, in the consideration of which there is never failing interest. No one knows anything of it, notwithstanding much speculation, on the part of philosophers, which to me has "become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," except as it is revealed in the word of God. Jesus laid a few days in the grave, was resurrected and dwelt on the earth forty days in the immortal, glorified state; and then went direct to heaven from which He is to descend at the last day in the same manner as He ascended. In the time before His ascension He gave no word of experience following the crucifixion and while His body was in the tomb. Lazarus and the widow's son died and were resuscitated; not resurrected, for resurrection implies a state not subject to any more death, and they died again, and are dead yet; and not one word is recorded of their experience in another life. So all that we know is by divine revelation.

In chapter 4, 18th verse, I Thessalonians we notice:

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words." What words? Begin with the 13th verse and read, noting as you do so, the nature and plain teaching in every verse. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope." He speaks to Christians. Tells them to not be in ignorance concerning the state and future prospects of their beloved dead; and that for them they need not have the same sorrow, that others do, "which have no hope;" or in other words, have no faith in the doctrine of the resurrection. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." These words must necessarily be full of comfort to such as believe their loved ones, who are dead, "sleep in Jesus." Now notice the Apostle's authority for speaking or writing. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord." What? "That we which are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep." If Jesus comes to-day, while we are alive, the fact, that we are among the living, would neither hinder, nor prevent them, who are dead. They are all right; provided they died in the Lord. No blessing is pronounced upon any other part of the dead. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." That is the first part of the resurrection, the raising of the dead "in Christ." They receive the first benefits of the coming of Christ, and the living will be permitted to see the opening of the graves. Then why sorrow for them, our Christian dead, as others do who have neither hope for their dead nor for themselves? It is only they who have a hope in the resurrection that look with any degree of certainty to a future life. I do not try to polish off my remarks by lugging in anything said by the philosophers on the subject, for they know nothing about it.

Then, again, the benefits of the coming of Christ accrue, secondly, to such as are alive at that event, and have been faithful unto Him. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds" (caught up with them who have just risen from the dead), "to meet the Lord in the air." What will be the result of that meeting? "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now there they are, exactly as I copy from my Bible, the words which the Apostle urges us Christians to use for our mutual comforting. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." So any man who may tell you anything concerning a future life not in accordance with these words, so plainly, beautifully and comfortingly expressed by the inspired Apostle, is telling something not built on the sure foundation. The words as they are written are comforting to me, and the only ones, with such as may be of like import, that give me any hope of another life. But this is the glorious hope, the bow of promise.

My father came up from Fayetteville Saturday evening, spending the night and nearly all of the next day. We had a good time together; we always do. We are congenial spirits, and often laugh and grow sad as we talk on subjects that provoke the one or the other. I read him the words of my present text, and preached the same, and had an attentive, respectful listener. Before he left, for his time was limited, as he is in the government service, and has always been a faithful, obedient servant, and moves as his superior officer commands, he told me of a sad home going. He met my mother here at the depot a few weeks ago. We had been enjoying a partial family gathering, and they went to their home. He says that when they entered the house there fell upon him a feeling he had never experienced. His youngest and only remaining single daughter had recently married and gone to Tennessee; a married one, with her children, who had been visiting, had also gone home. And for the first time

in forty years he had no child to greet him as he entered the house. Nothing there to give a welcome to the two who had been faithful and loving parents to eight children, except a little dog. He says that the sense of loneliness and sadness was overpowering, and though a man of much self-control, he broke completely down. For all these years there had been one or more to give him a greeting in every home-coming. Why have I related this incident? Simply to say that but for this hope of an eternal reunion, of which my Scripture is so suggestive, these separations, with their accompanying sadness, would not be endurable. They help to make the tunnels on the railway of life, and but for the hope of another life, I would to-night be in a tunnel billions and billions of miles longer than the Swannanoa. But this hope lights a smile anew on the lips of death, and it says that in some sweet day, beyond the great shadow, we will meet again, to be ever with the Lord, where there will be no partings; and before this hope the eternal cloud, of the blackness of darkness, flies away, and we ride out of the little tunnels in the glowing light of God's unchangeable love, and moving on a road-bed built upon His everlasting word, singing as we go, "it's better farther on." There is one thing certain, if that eternal day doesn't come, we will know nothing to the contrary; but there is not much comfort in that thought, and I will conclude as I began: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." I can offer you nothing better. I. Thess. 4:13-18.

I will add a few points made by Dr. Clark, commentator. To set the Thessalonians right on this important subject, he, the Apostle Paul, says the learned doctor, delivers three important truths based on the Scriptures indicated:

1. He asserts, as he had done before, that they who died in the Lord should have, in virtue of Christ's resurrection, a resurrection unto eternal life and blessedness.
2. He makes a new discovery, that the last genera-

tion should not die at all, but be in a moment changed to immortals.

3. He adds another new discovery, that though the living should not die, but be transformed, yet the dead should first be raised, and be made glorious and immortal, and so in some measure have the preference and advantage of such as shall be found alive.

“Oh ye weary, sad, and tossed ones,
Drop not, faint not by the way!
Ye shall join the loved and just ones
In that dawn of perfect day.
Harp strings touched by angel fingers,
Murmured in my rapturous ear ;—
Evermore their sweet song lingers—
We shall know each other there.”

It is a precious Scripture lesson of only a few verses that I give my readers to-day. And the meaning of the verses to me, without the aid of commentary or philosophy, is as plain as the nose on my face. In their light I see no reason at all why a Christian should sorrow for them who sleep in Christ, as others sorrow for their dead who have no hope of eternal life, immortality.

NO CONTROVERSY ABOUT THIS.

What? “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.” I. Timothy 3:16. Yet I have heard of a preacher possessing the controversial spirit who took this text, and his amplification was to the effect that with plenty of controversy, and every one finally, of course, giving in to his infallible opinion, the mystery connected with godliness would disappear as the light was turned on. “No mystery, brethren,” says he, “in the true sense of the word; for controversy dispels and drives away every cloud, and the truth shines bright and clear.”

A good definition of the word mystery as here appearing is, “That which is beyond human comprehension un-

til explained. In this sense mystery often conveys the idea of something awfully sublime or important; something that excites wonder." The word godliness in the text, has reference specially to the entire plan of the atonement, as made through the sufferings and death and resurrection of Christ. The atonement is something which no human mind can think upon without wonder of the greatest character and depth. The mystery of godliness spoken of by the Apostle is: "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." "The mystery of godliness as we behold it in Christ, is the pillar and ground of the truth; and without controversy a great thing." But I have often been made weary in having to listen to words indicating mysterious dispensations of providence or godliness when indeed the event evoking the words had nothing in it of the mysterious whatever. Here is a young man of bright promise and lovable traits of character. The blood leaps in his veins and the glow of health and vigor shows in every feature. He, though, has come in contact with something operating against the laws of health. We see him prostrated with malignant typhoid. Pale, emaciated, weak, for a month perhaps, he struggles. Nature can bear the strain no longer. He dies. Then the prayer is made, "Sanctify, O Lord, this mysterious dispensation of Thy providence," etc. When there is nothing mysterious about it. The greatest mystery to my mind is how so many who are thus afflicted ever recover. One preacher, in referring to the fearful Havana catastrophe, in his prayer, uses the words: "We cannot understand the mystery of this awful fate visited upon the brave men of the nation's ship." Well, the mystery has not yet been solved as to how it occurred, but there is no mystery in the fact that the brave men, who stood for the nation's honor and welfare, met their death as the result of an explosion. Cause and effect. And in thinking of the un-

timely taking off of the gallant seamen my hand trembles and my eyes weep tears of grief and bitterness. Time alone, and a long time at that, may bring rest to the lonely and bereaved. God had nothing to do with the slaying of the faithful, obedient sailors, except in that, somewhere and in some way, His law, which is perfect, was violated, and they died. They gave their lives for their country, and there are millions who stand ready to march even to battle and to die, if there should be cause, in defense of the bonnie blue flag. But I have digressed. "Mystery of godliness." What is it? The Apostle answers:

1st. "God was manifest in the flesh." The incarnative. God and humanity in one body. Who can fathom the mystery? One who calls himself God. One who claims equality with God; One who does things that only a supernatural being could do; and yet we find Him in many particulars acting as a man; and, in fact, One in whose character, so unlike the human, not a flaw is to be found. But with all His excellencies, despised, rejected, insulted, cruelly treated, and finally murdered. "God was manifest in the flesh;" but for all that, put to open shame; so filled with suffering and agony that through the pores of His flesh there come great drops of bloody sweat; the blood actually diverted from its channels by His agony and suffering on man's account. And this is God. A mystery indeed.

2nd. "Justified in the Spirit." This word, spirit, has much mystery. His operations are as real as the sunlight. Still we cannot understand. The new birth is accomplished through the energy of the Holy Ghost. Christ does not attempt any explanation. Nicodemus, great in learning, listened with astonishment when told he must be born of the Spirit. How can these things be? God bears testimony to the Apostles and to Christ in the working of their miracles through and by this Spirit. They are justified from all the calumnies heaped upon them. Had not Christ been the real Messiah no such tes-

timony as the power to work miracles would have been accorded Him. For all that He did, never making a mistake, He was justified in the Spirit. So is man justified. Justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And the entire justification is backed by the Spirit.

3. "Seen of angels." For instance, there was one at the vacant tomb, who said: "He is not here; for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." This angel was the same of whom St. Mark speaks, and calls him a young man. Nothing said of wings. "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted." The women. St. Luke speaks of "two men," who stood by the women, and these men, angels, had on "shining garments." They spoke unto the women, asking: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how He spake unto you while He was yet in Galilee, saying the Son of Man must be delivered unto the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered His words." These angels must, of course, have seen Him, and yet it is written by St. Peter, "That the angels desired to look into these things." What things? Why necessarily the mysteries surrounding the atonement in its every detail. For they, "these holy beings, could have little knowledge of the necessity, reasons and economy of human salvation, and of the nature of Christ as God and man."

4th. "Preached unto the Gentiles." "This was one grand part of the mystery which had been hidden in God, that the Gentiles should be made fellow-heirs with the Jews, and be admitted into the kingdom of God."—Commentator. The inference, according to this, is that prior to this time, the advent of Christ, there was a barrier, impassable, preventing the Gentiles' entrance into the kingdom. In this respect, the mystery, to my mind, is not the

same as that appearing to the commentator. He goes on: "To the Gentiles, therefore, He was proclaimed as having pulled down the middle wall of partition between them and the Jews; that through Him God had granted unto them repentance unto life; and that they also might have redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of sins." The mystery, then, of this part of godliness is not that He was "preached unto the Gentiles;" but that it could have been any other way. It seems that this was, in every sense, the right thing to give them the Gospel. But are the Gentiles who died before the middle wall of partition was pulled down perished? I should hope not. But there is mystery nevertheless; though one thing is certain now—there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. All are free in Christ. No controversy as to that.

5th. "Believed on in the world." This is as great a mystery as any part of the subject in hand. That One, who was crucified with thieves, under an order of court, should wherever He has been held up by a faithful ministry, be accepted by thousands and believed on as the only and all-sufficient Savior of sinners. Many who had to do with His crucifixion became His followers. "And a great company of the priests themselves became obedient to the faith." Acts 6:7. The work, in the name of Christ, is now in a small state compared to what it must be if the whole world is saved through Him. It is no mystery though to see how one may be saved from every kind of vice and human weakness by so believing on Him as to be like Him. But how few are like the model after which they claim to pattern. But it is a blessed thought that by Him, and only by Him, we are finally to be judged; and I am sure He will do us right. That's the record He left. He had no harsh words for any except the false, the pretenders.

6th. "Received up into glory." This fact is of the utmost consequence to the maintenance of the Christian faith. That Christ, in a divine, glorified, but human form,

is in another sphere, from whence He, in person, must come, to receive all the believers unto Himself, at some certain time, though, concerning which we have no data to indicate when such a coming will occur. He has gone away; "received up into glory," where He occupies the position of a judge. If He is your advocate now, you need not fear Him as a judge. But if you refuse to put your case in His hands, and you meet Him as your Judge, better for you had you never been born. The opportunity is before you, "and without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." It will always be so, until we meet Him face to face. But there is a privilege given you to be a part of the world which believes on Him, and in Him, and thus you make yourself safe to-day.

THEY WHO BELIEVE NOT TO PERISH.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

This of course is a very plain passage of Scripture. So that not a few use it for the preaching of doctrine that if weighed accurately would pan out pure universalism. There are many who are going to perish; but for one cause, unbelief. They who do not perish are saved by belief. If you will read this familiar verse carefully it will appear to teach that the word "whosoever" is used indiscriminately. This word opens the door of salvation to all. While this is true, God does not mean to teach that all will be saved, even though the door is wide open. It is to "whosoever believeth in Him" that salvation comes. The converse of this is plainly declared in Mark 16:16. "But he that believeth not shall be damned." The text is positive in its teaching that they who believe are saved; not to be saved. Should not perish, but "have everlasting life." In another place it is said: "I give unto them

eternal life; and they shall never perish." God does not save sinners unconditionally, but when He saves His work is thorough. This John 3:16 is the believer's magna charta. For nearly 1900 years it has pointed the way to a certain salvation. Comparatively speaking, but few of the world's multiplied millions have believed "in Him" during all these nineteen centuries, and millions yet refuse to believe, and consequently remain in a lost and perishing condition. After the course of several thousand years God may submit another plan, but I cannot see how one easier than that embodied in this text could be provided. Believe and you are saved. Men say they believe in Christ and still realize themselves unsaved. I cannot so understand it. They do not believe with the heart. To do so means righteousness. When one actually and really believes in Him as is expressed in this text he is not in a perishing but a saved condition. There is not in all the Bible a passage of greater import than this. Familiar as it is, how few see in it the pearl of great price. That for which a man might profitably give his entire fortune to possess. And yet it is offered to one without money and without price. Why don't you take the gift? I will answer: "You don't believe in Him. And because of this lack of belief you do not trust in Him."

A NEW CREATURE.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." I. Cor. 5:17. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6:15.

We speak of a new book; a new fashion; a new theory; the new chemistry; a new discovery. The word is opposed to old. Old things are passed away. Everything is new. Any one understands the meaning of the word new. Naturally man is opposed to Christ. The Christ life is not

like man's life. Man is born in sin, and as age increases he cultivates the sin germ, until he can properly be designated an old sinner. A friend of mine wrote me the other day that he was still the same old sinner that he used to be. His words gave me a very clear idea of his present status. For I knew him in the long ago. Sorry he has not changed, but his frankness in confession is to be commended at least. But a man changes. The order is that he must do so. He must be born again before he can see the kingdom of heaven. And the kingdom of heaven is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When born again, not of the flesh, for this is not subject to the law, but of the Spirit, he becomes a new creature. Being born of the Spirit, his life is adorned by the fruits of the Spirit, some of which are righteousness, joy, love, temperance, humility, faith; in fact, his every day conduct, in every relation of life, is but the outcome of that which dwells within him. Christ being the indwelling power, he is now a new creature. This is the only way by which the old man in sin can become new. He may be moral and possess many excellent traits of character, but until he is known to be a follower of Christ it is an error to call him a new creature. The Apostle Paul was an extremely nice man, a gentleman of high character, education and culture. True he fought Christians, but in that he thought himself to be doing God's service, just as many professed Christians think, who permit themselves to engage with bitterness in religious and sectarian controversy, most of which is only innate meanness, and strongly in evidence that not yet can they lay claim to being new creatures. The Apostle Paul after his conversion became thoroughly new. He opposed evil wherever existing. In the Church he found much, especially at Corinth, showing that this church was not made up altogether of new creatures; therefore, they were not in Christ, though members of His Church. It has not escaped the eyes of the world that many professors have

really undergone but little change, and are, though wearing the cloak of righteousness, the same old fellows they used to be. Dying to sin, as it is called, did not change them very much. And for this reason, that not a few are not what they profess to be, men who lay no claim to personal piety, say, though having respect for the Christian religion, that they care not to embrace it. This excuse may show weakness, but at the same time we admit that there is cause for it. You had better never make a profession of religion than to do so and not live as honestly as some who are openly sinful. The world knows the old sinner, for he is well marked.

Apropos of the fact that religion doesn't change the character of all its professors, I am reminded of an anecdote. Some gentlemen were discussing different religious doctrines. They were led to that of the transmigration of the soul. An old, good natured Dutchman was in the circle, and became much interested in this particular doctrine, and asked that it be explained to him. "Well, you see, Hans," said one of the company, "you know you must die; and your soul will pass from your body into something else. For instance, your soul will go into a canary bird, and this bird will be placed in a beautiful cage, and all day long you may be privileged to sit and sing for a pretty lady." Hans liked that. "But the canary must die, and then your soul may go into a flower of rare beauty, blooming in the yard of the same fair lady." That was very nice. "But some day the donkey gets into the front yard and, coming by the flower in which resides your soul, he bites it off, and your soul is then in the donkey." Didn't like that so well. "And presently one of your old friends is passing and sees you leisurely picking the grass on the lawn. He notices a familiar feature. Runs in the yard, seizes you by the ear cordially, giving it a hearty shake, saying at the time: 'Why Hans, old man, I am so glad to see you after so long a time; how are you any way, my boy? You don't seem to be much changed; you

look very much as you did years ago. Certainly I am pleased to see you; the same old Hans.’’ There has been a big revival in your town. You got converted and joined the church. You sing and pray, and it was even mentioned in the papers how active you were. But you went down to Raleigh to attend a Democratic and a Populist convention meeting on the same day. It was a big time, and before dinner you were in the saloon under the big hotel. Directly you were recognized by many, one of whom might say: ‘‘Why, I heard Jim had got religion; I guess it must be a mistake, he seems to be the same jolly old Jim of the sweet long ago.’’ But Jim explains that he was really a professor and would be all right when he got home again, but that he never could be religious long at a time in Raleigh; and especially at two political conventions. Poor Jim, he is no new man. He wants to be good and at the same time get on an occasional spree. He represents a large class. You might as well attempt to successfully ride two horses at the same time going in opposite directions as to make folks believe you are a new creature when they know your bad habits still cling to you. Donkey parties, when we come right down to social thinking are more real than fantastic.

External performances are of no force in making a new man. All of them may be set aside by the words: ‘‘Neither circumcision availeth nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.’’ You may be baptized with or in all the water of the State; you may have placed on your heads the hands of all the bishops and prelates; but this avails nothing if the heart is not clean and the spirit not right. You may profess sanctification, a state of sinless perfection in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and the profession is not worth a row of pins if it fails to show up as good or better than men who do not profess it, but

whose every day walk is evidence of their faith in Christ and humility of life.

“O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels thy blood,
So freely spilt for me !”

Pray and sing that every morning. Help by your life to make answer to the same, and you'll be in the kingdom of heaven before you know it. We all need to ask for the mercy of God.

RELIGION KEEPS THE MIND.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand..... Let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:5-7.

If the Apostle had said let your immoderation be known unto all men, it would have exactly suited the gyrations of a lot of present day religious enthusiasts. The working of miracles is out of date. A miracle is a deviation from the laws of nature. We know that the law of nature now admits of no exceptions. The disciples worked miracles, but there is no history of any other class of men doing so, except such as have turned out to be frauds. Peace of God, which is a part of true religion, keeps not only the heart, but the mind. These Christian Scientists and other ministers who claim the almighty power in the curing of incurable diseases are doing no little harm. When I ask God to heal a sick man, the request is made strictly on the condition if He so wills. If the man lives, the prayer is answered; if he dies, the prayer is answered; because it was in accordance with the law that he should die. This writer is a very sick man. He has been in the very shadow of death, and he knows and he writes it without a tremor that his life hangs by a brittle thread—liable

to break any moment. Standing in the shadow, I claim to be at least a good man, through the mercy and grace of God. If it be God's will for me to linger and suffer, even for years, I submit. If, on the other hand, it is His will for me to pass through the valley and cross the river in a shorter period, I submit. But I, as a minister of the Gospel, do protest against the perpetration of much stuff that is being given the people as truth. Here the other day a man with Bright's disease claimed divine healing. Christian science did it. He was dead in a month. The scientists would have said of his death, it was an illusion, the dead body, funeral procession and putting the body in the grave. I believe God would cure men as quickly as he would anybody if the cure could be legally made. I don't own one dollar's worth of property, but I will give any man \$10,000 to cure me of my malady. This is a fraud. "All that is born must die."

I clip the following from an editorial in the North Carolina Advocate, of the 2nd inst., entitled, "Where is it Going to End?"

"After a while it was so many 'converted, sanctified and baptized with fire.' Then it was so many 'converted, sanctified, baptized with fire, and moved to dance the holy dance.' Now a writer in the Way of Faith caps the climax by reporting the case of a brother, who, after having been converted, sanctified, baptized with fire, and, probably, dancing the holy dance, was healed of valvular disease of the heart!

"We are always glad to acknowledge and appreciate every blessing coming in the visitation of the Holy Ghost, but we would like to know how many more blessings are in the catalogue, and where the whole thing is going to end."

If I were to comment on everything I read in the editorial department of the Advocate, suggestive of the importance of exercising common sense in matters religious as well as material, I would not be able to do the work in

the paper for which I am in duty bound to write each week.

The inference drawn from the above is that a man in the midst of a religious meeting has been healed of valvular disease of the heart. Now, I must say, in order to speak the truth, that I do not believe it. He may have been healed, but this healing only came about by the process of law. This writer has, for four years, been seriously afflicted with a similar trouble. It may be called a mechanical trouble. There is a lesion through which the blood, or part of it, at every stroke of the heart, falls back, regurgitates. All these years I have asked God to cure me; I have asked faith. No man has more faith in His word. The doctors tell me that there is some compensation going on by reason of the quiet life which I live, and this compensation may continue, and, of course, if the lesion should finally close and I again become a strong man, God would have credit for the same, in that the cure was wrought through and by force of His law, which is always perfect. At the same time, when I awake in the morning I thank Him for keeping me through the night, and ask for His protecting care every day. Yesterday I was very unwell, but this morning I am better; and with a steady hand, and I think, a head not touched to any eccentricity, I write these lines.

My little girl said to me sometime ago: "Papa, I don't see you down on your knees as much as I used to see you." I explained to her that my joints were stiff; that my knee caps were not protected by flesh as they used to be. In consequence of the stiffness it was hard for me to drop down so often as in the days gone by. And then I told her I was praying all the time. That effectual prayer was not so much in the act of kneeling as in the spirit through which we made our requests to God. That my whole life, being one of physical helplessness, was a constant cry to God for strength and grace to do and to suffer His will. That when she was in school I was praying for her, and for

her mother engaged in her house work, and for the Church, and the preachers, and for all the world. And that I knew when she and her mother knelt in prayer they never forgot to ask God to make me well. She then understood. And my friends who call on me say that in asking Louise on the street how is her papa, she invariably replies, with a smile, "He's better!" And so he is. Better furnished every day with grace from God's storehouse to go on with his work trusting to have the ability to inspire men and women who read his words to live closer to God, and as they journey to the land of which the Lord, our God, said: "I will give it thee," to do so patiently, cheerfully, faithfully, and at the same time wearing the "white flower of holiness" and consecration. I say, but not in a spirit of bravado, as the man on the gallows crying to the hangman, "Let her go," but with the spirit of perfect trust in extreme trial, that I am ready; but every day I fail not to say: "God be merciful to me a sinner, and forgive my trespasses, as I forgive those who trespass against me." I preached to the people that in the severest trial and disappointment the religion of Christ would be a sure and certain stay. I knew nothing then by actual experience, only by observation, and what I gathered from God's word. I never tried to prove it to be the truth. I accepted it as the truth. When the time came to me to test its truth by being placed in the furnace of fire, it was my only comfort and refuge; and now, after all these years, I can say, by experience, I know He has never left me, and even in my Gethsemane I often have a baptism by reason of His presence. I have no time to discuss mooted points. The night is coming and my work will soon be done. While engaged as a minister of the Gospel let my preaching be of a character to not disturb the faith of the children of God. Let it be such as will keep them in the old path, where they may find by walking therein rest for their souls, and not of a character that will run them out of the old paths and rush them on to the luna-

tic asylum. The asylums are full now, and God have mercy on any preacher who uses and preaches doctrine which runs the people crazy. "Let your moderation (common sense) be known unto all men." And the peace of God will not only keep our hearts, but our minds, in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4th chapter.) Religion ought not to make you crazy.

A good man, but a fanatic, called on me. He paid me the honor of saying that he thought me a Christian, but that I didn't have enough of the Holy Ghost. I replied that it would surprise me if I didn't have more than he. I was very weak that day, my digestion was poor, my heart weak. The fellow wanted me to rave, to jump out of bed and dance the holy dance, cry out that God had healed me and then go into a trance and see visions. But the Holy Ghost told me to lie still; that the man meant well, but had wheels in his head. I laid still. I obeyed the Holy Ghost. "Faith cometh by hearing," not by seeing visions or seeing anything else, "and hearing by the word of God." A few days before this visit I had written a letter to a lady in the town thanking her for certain kindness to me. After my friend left there came a reply from the good woman, in which she thanked me for the words of Scripture quoted in my letter. They had done her so much good, and many precious words breathing a prayer that God would again make me strong to do my loved employ. And then, in the quiet of home, I received a baptism with the Holy Spirit. I was so glad to get the letter from the good woman, and happy because my words in the name of the Lord had carried a benediction to one who had recently laid to rest a husband and also a noble, promising son.

The man who said I didn't have enough of the Holy Ghost has gone crazy, so I am informed, and is in the asylum, while I, through the mercy of God, am still at large on a small scale.

You ask, referring to a certain matter, of which we all

have knowledge, "and where is the whole thing going to end?" It will end, unless checked, by a split in the Methodist Church, and the prevalence of a superstition as rank as ever blighted the cause of Christ. There are some things carried on to-day in the name of Christ which make His cause a by-word and a reproach. I am going to steer away from all of it except the Gospel of Jesus as it relates to repentance, regeneration and the necessity of living a holy life, and die with a clear brain.

HE COULDN'T PAY THE PRICE.

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Matthew 19:22.

Christ wanted the young man to be consecrated, but for him to attain that condition involved a price too much for him to pay. In an interesting conversation a few weeks ago, a very rich woman, who wants to be a disciple of Christ, and though a member of the Church, has never been satisfied with her life, asked me to give her the meaning of consecration. I referred her to the words of Christ to this rich young man as being a clear definition; and also stated that, though different from a great many preachers, especially those who did not wish to say anything to the discomfort of the rich, I had no authority whatever to take anything from the words of Christ. "Do you mean, then, to preach that consecration means giving up everything for the cause?" she asked. "Yes, madam," was my reply; "everything; time, self and earthly stores." She didn't appear to like that doctrine, and breathed a sigh, but not, apparently, of relief. She has great possessions, and like the rich young man, wants to keep them; but she will not do so very long.

The text is not a parable nor a part of one, but history. The young man mentioned came to Jesus with the

inquiry: "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The Lord referred him to the duty of keeping the Commandments. He had kept them from his youth up, was his reply. Pretty good fellow. Jesus Christ then said: "If thou will be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." But he couldn't do that, and "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." There are rich men who prefer to be imperfect rather than pay the price, though they pretend to have entered in the race as the followers of Jesus. Some preachers tell the rich that the Lord didn't mean exactly what He said in this case. According to their doctrine, Jesus Christ must have been a man whose statements were clothed with much ambiguity. But they don't strike me that way. "Give to the poor." Many of them on public occasions will give largely to the collections for special purposes, but when the hat goes round for the poor they may drop in a quarter. A Christian worker (?) called in at a home where, from the early morning until late at night a poor woman bent over her machine making shirts at 3 cents each. She was actually giving her life. No nourishing food, no fresh air, nothing but grim poverty, and the despair of the man who will catch at a straw. The fat, well-fed worker spoke to the woman of the good God, His abundant mercies; and all the time failed to note that here was a case where ample opportunity was offered to prove by a substantial benefaction the truth of His words. But he was among the number who have eyes, but see not; ears, but hear not; nor understand, that the plaintive cry of this woman, "The poor have no God," is in a large measure true.

The young man came running, and went away slowly and sad. That's the way many do in the time of the revival. They get on a boom. The evangelist goes away with his pockets pretty well filled. The excitement dies, and after a little while the spiritual status is again nor-

mal. When men begin to look at the cost of discipleship there is drifting. The religion of Jesus Christ in one sense may be likened to leaven; it works noiselessly. The young man came ready to do anything the Lord might command; but he went away unwilling to do the "one thing" which he lacked. This conduct lead to the testimony from Christ: "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Scriptures preserve a solemn silence as to the young man after the incident calling forth the text. Of course he is dead. But after a lapse of eighteen centuries he is still a lively corpse, and his conduct ought to be a lesson. Where will he stand when the great day comes? Where will others stand who like him refuse to pay the price?

The doctrine taught by the text is simply this: Men of means must unload if they really do wish to pass through the golden gate. They should see that wealth is really an obstacle in the way of personal salvation if not properly used. The doctrine enunciated above is strongly implied in such texts as the following: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." This doctrine must be true, for Jesus taught it. The disciples were amazed at the teaching, for there were many rich men in that day, and they asked: "Who then can be saved?" But the answer: "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible," proves that the rich may get in. But as before written, they must necessarily do a lot of the unloading here. Not that this is the means of salvation, for redemption is not of works, but that it is a fruit of salvation; and the rich man, who is saved does not hesitate to put everything upon the altar of God, and then become God's steward. The wisest man is he who is willing and does act in this honored capacity.

The dangers in riches may be summed up in a few points which I take from the discourse of one Samuel Martin, who preached over fifty years ago, and whose sermons and life brought forth the fruits of righteousness in hundreds and thousands. He still lives. He says:

1. "Wealth is apt to beget a spirit of independence to God. 'Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God. And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and gold is multiplied; and thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.' The pursuit of salvation involves entire dependence towards God; therefore, the man who is always talking of what he has, as the result of his own brain and muscle power, is mighty apt to exhibit that spirit of independence which is, usually, an accomplishment of the acquisition of wealth. The poor are really dependent upon the caprice of others; they are pilgrims through a wilderness, trusting that the manna may fall daily; the rich are the citizens of the land, which to them flows with milk and honey; and if they are wise they will see to it that none of the pilgrims passing their way go without a sufficiency of the needed nourishment to make comfortably the journey to Canaan. If the rich do not get too independent they will have a chance to get through the gate.

2. "Wealth fosters pride. 'The rich man is wise in his own conceit.' And the same felicitous writer, Solomon, says: 'Wealth maketh many friends.' And it is right it should. Christ teaches that we should ~~not~~ make to ourselves friends with the m^mimon of unrighteousness. But then, you know that there are friends and friends. But don't use it for making friends of the character that only follow you because you are rich. These are the kind who only follow wealth or fame, and leave the wretch to weep. The snob must give up his snobbishness. 'God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble.' Wealth by nourishing pride puts an obstacle in the way of progress to the kingdom. If you really want to get in, be humble;

use your means for the good of others, and there will be a chance for you to get through the gate.

3. "Wealth presents strong inducements to walk, in all things, by sight. In the case of wealth the source of temporal supply is visible. Such questions as, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? What appearance shall we make? What shall we do? Where shall we go? With whom shall we associate? are all answered by the wealth that is possessed. The habit of walking by sight is thus readily formed. It is dangerous to form this habit. Why? 'The just shall live by faith.' 'He that believeth shall be saved.' And faith is 'the substance of things expected, the evidence of things not seen.' I believe in faith and in exercising it. Had I not had my corn muffin for dinner to-day the lack of it would not have disturbed my faith. Up to the present the muffin has been ready all the time. So far on the way to eternal life my faith has abided. If I were rich I might be walking by sight. The rich, who do so, put an impediment in the way. If they walk in the same way as the poor who are rich in faith, there will be chance, so the way-bill declares, for them to get through the gate."

There are other impediments which might be mentioned, but my pencil is getting short, and besides, I prefer to prescribe in broken doses, and thereby not overdo the patience of my patients; but do them good.

However, let me say, finally, to those of you who have an abundance and realize that you are saved men and women, remember that God's grace is stronger than wealth. "You are saved for God's sake," and not merely for your own. You are saved to show forth His praise. Believe that you are not your own. The use of your property for Christ and for your fellow man will testify to the triumphs of the Holy Spirit in your heart. That you may give this testimony, spend not largely on yourself—but little on dress—and nothing, it may be, on ornament. The finger might keep to the hand without a ring, and the breast

might respire without a jewel. Let not the adorning of either sex be "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel." Sure as you are born, too much of this is sinful. A woman, sitting in a fine church, with a fifty dollar dress and a hundred dollars in jewelry on her person is according to Scripture, not likely to get through the gate; if it happens somebody living near her is not able to buy a cheap dress that she may go to hear the word of God. The rich folks, and all others possessed of inordinate pride, and some of the poor have this also, had best watch. In the great day you may not find the latch to the golden gate. There is a chance for you to find it now. "Seek and ye shall find." "Mind not high things, condescend to men of low estate. Be clothed with humility."

"I charge you that are rich in this world, that ye be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things we enjoy. That ye do good, that ye be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal life." Remember who uses these words. Do what He says; begin at once, and you will then be apt to get through the golden gate. But perhaps you prefer the pleasures of sin for a season. But this pleasure is without profit—it costs more as an investment than it brings in paying dividends. Better do what God says. Amen.

THE WIDOW'S IMPORTUNITY.

"Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." Luke 17:5.

That was the idea of the unjust judge. He would grant the widow's prayer, not that he had any special inclina-

tion, prompted by piety or philanthropy, but that he might be rid of her. She had frequently called and found him to be an exceedingly hard case; for he "feared not God, neither regarded man." It is difficult to withstand a woman. When she says a certain thing is to be done it generally turns out as she has planned. I know one who for a year or more has been asking for a table cloth. Her husband thinks it is not needed, but she means to have it, and her importunity will fetch the desired article of domestic economy. How much money would a man raise for a church entertainment? Put a woman in charge and everybody gives. Then women pray more than men. There are scores of men who would have never been anything but for a faithful, praying woman. This woman, however, had no husband. But she had an adversary, an enemy, who was using her ill. She carried the matter to a judge, and he, finally, though not looking into the merits of the case, gave the relief demanded in the complaint. He was willing to do anything to be spared her continual worry. The Savior spoke of this judge and the woman petitioner to point the lesson of persistent, never ceasing prayer. "That man ought always to pray and not to faint." Many faint by the wayside, give up the struggle and say: "It is vain trying to serve God." But this is wrong; it is not vain. He answers prayer, and rewards faithful service. He is bound to give unto them that ask, for He so promises and He cannot lie. In September last I came to Jonesboro and struck tent, without ability to work, except occasionally to use my pencil. We rented a house and went into winter quarters. One evening sitting before the fire thinking how few were the dollars in hand to keep up necessary expenses, and watching the glow of the firelight as it fell upon the brown locks of the little head so trustingly resting against my knee, the thought, with irresistible force, came to my mind, how may I provide for her, her mother and myself? How supplement the small, but nevertheless valuable, income paid

by the conference, and the two lodges of which I am a member? And God Almighty, recognizing this as a prayer, showed the way. That's all there is in it. It came as the result of faith in Him with some nerve thrown in.

This world is the place where faith gets its reward. If mine should give way at this stage of the proceedings, darkness, without hope, would be the result. If you fail to press on there will be no reward in this life, and that is the one that interests me now. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." That's the point; it is plainly marked. We see the goodness of the Lord here, and do not wait to reach heaven for its exhibition.

However often you may go to God with your petitions He does not become weary. Your tears, afflictions and helplessness appeal to Him, and He cannot be unmindful of infirmity. This is the proper way of looking at conditions which otherwise would be sources of worry and perplexity.

Another personal illustration, if you please. We could afford to buy but a quart of milk per day. It takes nearly that much for me, as I use nothing in liquid form except a cup of coffee at breakfast and water during the day. My little girl had said she hoped some day we could have milk to go round. Of course she had part of the quart. What she said put me to thinking. We must have a cow. If you ask for one let it be of good quality. I wrote for prices. Answer came; would let me know in a few days. Two weeks passed. One letter brings surprise, though it should not be that when God answers prayer. Here is the contents of the letter: "Dolly Lawrence, fine little cow, shipped you to-day with my best wishes and compliments; hope she will reach you in good order." Dolly is full blooded Jersey. She is out in the yard and my wife is milking her. The little girl now knows there will be "plenty of milk to go round." It was not necessary for me to get on my knees and ask. I let the request be

made known in faith and you note the result. A friend said to my wife that he would like her to write and ask the good man to send him one. She replied that he was not sick. But he answered he had not been feeling at all well for several weeks. I am almost persuaded to think that the pretty cow was set aside for me about the time of entering into this work. Of course I didn't know it; but the Father did. And His servant who sent the gift, in the time of final rewards, will have many to say of him, "I was hungry and he gave me meat." Prayer is desire; and this need not be expressed in words if you really have faith. The heavenly Father knoweth your needs; and He promises under any circumstances to supply them.

The argument in this parable "is cumulative—if the widow prevailed over such indifference, and without an advocate wrested justice from such a judge when there was only his selfishness to appeal to—how much more shall the believer prevail when he meets everlasting love, as well as infinite equity in the court, has an all powerful advocate, and finds every perfection of the judge arrayed on his side!"

There is a promise to all of God's children that He will see them through; and the men who cannot bank on divine promise need not expect anything. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." But the door doesn't swing on its hinges to the knock of unbelief.

Are any of my readers in darkness or sorrow? Remember it is but for "a little while and the darkness flees away. Let there be no impatience under divine discipline. A refiner and purifier of silver sits beside his crucible, watching his precious metal; for he knows that one degree of heat beyond what is necessary to release the dross is injurious to the metal. And God does not forget or neglect His saints when He subjects them to the crucible of sorrow. He watches the process and puts out the fires so soon as their work is accomplished."

But until your work is ended you will need divine

strength to do it as God wants it done and you must ask Him for the strength.

If you have been trying to live without prayer, repent of this sin; knock at the door, go in, and find pasture.

LIARS, THEIR DOOM.

"And all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."—Rev. 21:8.

The book of Revelation is the last message from Christ. Accepting as a fact that the giver of this message was never known to tell an untruth, or to evade a question; accepting as a fact that He tells the truth in this message, it appears as if there is a mighty hot time coming for liars. If they believed the text it strikes me they would be on the alert to make amendment, especially as to this habit. People, generally, are averse to the fire and brimstone doctrine, although, it is stated with a positiveness that should admit of no doubt. The Bible is not a doubt book on any class of sin and here I give some instances of liars and lying as laid down therein: The devil, Gen. 3:4-15; Cain, Gen. 4:9; Sarah, Gen. 18:15; Jacob, Gen. 27:19; Joseph's brethren, Gen. 37:31, 32; Gibeonites, Josh. 9:9; Sampson, Judges 16:10; Saul, I Sam. 15:13; Michal, I Sam. 19:14; David, I Sam. 21:2; Prophet of Bethel, I Kings 13:18; Gehazi, II. Kings 5:22; Job's friends, Job 13:4; Ninevites Neh. 3:1; Peter, Matt. 26:72; Ananias, Acts 5:5; Cretians, Tit. 1:12. It will pay you to read this Scripture here indicated. Putting the present time in conjunction with that of which this Scripture speaks and all intervening time, we may well say with the immortal bard, "Lord, Lord, how is this world given to lying!" There is no excuse for a lie even under pressure. The devil is the father of liars and is the first of whom we have record. "Among

other hideous and awful sins, lying is put down as one of the damning vices. Adulterers, whoremongers, drunkards, railers, and the like, shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and lying is put in the black category of these crimes." No being deserves execration more than a liar; and a lie is a lie even if it be what is called a "white lie." If you mean to escape the second death, "fire and brimstone," you must leave off lying.

The mother, who hasn't grit sufficient to tell her child that she can have no more cake, but instead, tells her that the cake is all gone, when there is more in the pantry and the child knows it, is making for the lake; and setting an example, that if the child follows, will make it a liar. The father, who speaks an untruth before his son, need not be surprised when the son lies to him. The doctrine of sowing and reaping applies to the practice of falsehood and parents in this respect should certainly put a close guard on their mouths. This sin of lying is universal, and probably no man living has not in one or more respects been guilty of thus offending. The "mystery of iniquity" is something calculated to bring wonder when a professed Christian is found guilty. And then, there is the preacher who holds a revival and the account given is that "there were fifty conversions--when probably there were not a half dozen, for conversion is a wonderful change in man--that forty joined the church, and others of the converts will join." This may or may not be true. Of course if one tells a falsehood by mistake he is not guilty of the crime, but telling as a fact, what one knows to be not true, puts him in the category of liars; and he is on the way to the lake. There is one thing certain--the truth can be told. And when it is spoken or written plainly, simply, without technical language, explanation is never necessary. It is a very uncomfortable business to be engaged in--that of having to explain. It might be well for the people who sing, "Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow thee," to stop and think a

moment on what they are telling Jesus. What have they left? And what forsaken? I had a very intelligent Englishman as superintendent of a Sunday school. He was a matter of fact, plain, business man, and carried these characteristics into his religious work. The school was fond of singing, "Is my name written there?" The superintendent was a good singer, but when this hymn was announced he invariably asked the school to omit the first verse, beginning with the words, "I care not for riches, neither silver nor gold." He was a merchant and six days weekly was gathering in the shekels, and he said somehow, it made him feel streaked to sing those words. But it is said, though I do not endorse the theology, that if you do not mean to tell a story, it makes no difference. But I cannot see who has the authority to draw the line.

There are many different kinds of liars. Some lie directly, others indirectly. Among the latter is the fellow who withholds the truth. He goes on the stand and takes the oath to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The lawyer instructs him to state to his honor and the jury all he knows about the matter between A and B. He may answer truthfully every question put to him, but if he fails to tell one he knows, he is a liar; for he swore to tell the whole truth; and part of the knowledge he had has been withheld. Brethren, this sin of lying is awful and more fearful when seen in men who are high in religious work. Then, there is the lie indulged by the good sister of the fashionable world. She sees a woman coming whom she knows to be a bore and directs the servant to go to the door and say her lady is "not in." And then the lady consoles the conscience, still sensitive, with the doctrine. I wasn't "in" to her. Better to have been bored awhile, and showed it, than to lie. The merchants, the clerks, the lawyers, the doctors, the preachers, the newspapers, and many other good people have made mistakes in this direction, but in the long run failure to bring out the whole truth has

brought them no good. It is best always to tell the truth, even if one has to suffer for it. Sometime ago I remarked to a good friend what he thought of the movement to establish a paper which would never permit any news except what was known to be the truth. To print no advertisements with a single loophole. "Well," said he, "if you've got some money, and want to lose it, put it in that kind of a paper." He knew something of the business and his direct way of answering my question rather discouraged the project. But the truth, in the end, will pay; it always pays. "Let Christians do right and tell the truth if the heavens fall. It will all be right, no matter what the emergency or apparent consequences here below." "Lying is but one of the black features and sad evidences of the doctrine of universal and total depravity." "Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all."

It is certain the text makes no discrimination. "Fire and brimstone" is the pay, finally, for lying. But, notwithstanding, there are lots of men and women who really appear to enjoy the business, and act as if they couldn't quit it. There is no chance for them according to the text.

A BISHOP'S SERMON.

I have the pleasure this week of giving my readers a short sermon of Bishop E. H. Hendrix of the Southern M. E. Church. He, as all our bishops, speaks clearly, plainly, simply, the old story, that we all love so well. The sermon, of condensed power, is taken from the Epworth Messenger, Memphis, Tenn. It is remarkable for its simplicity.

"Text: 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' Rom. 5:6. Why did Christ delay His coming? He was not ready. It was a great disappointment to the people for a long time.

New tribes came upon the stage of action, but to pass away as the years rolled by. Why did He not come in Noah's time? Why not in Moses' time? Because God had other purposes in view. Four thousand years had passed before God's promises were realized. It was not because He was not willing to come. The time was not yet ripe. This delay was in accordance with God's plan. With God this world is not a week old. A year with God is but a day. We are but in the morning of the world's history. We are just beginning to open the first pages.

"When the angels announced the coming of Jesus, and that all men were to be saved, the world took on a new life. Did you ever think how important this word 'all' is? Why it occurs 5,500 times in the Scriptures. The Christian religion has caused all men to think. God's purposes were fully accomplished when Christ did come. Had He come before this time, perhaps His record might have been lost. Now we have a record that can't be lost, for all time dates from the birth of Christ. His birth profoundly affected the world, and everything celebrates it.

"The Jews were God's chosen people, but no less so than the Romans, but neither understood the importance of the Scriptures. Nevertheless He was simply making preparations for His coming. He has come to be our burden-bearer. He is our comfort. The literature, music, art of our land all tell of the coming of Christ. He is our Savior—come to take away our sins and lead us to glory and to God. He cannot be taken away from us. You can take a sunbeam and extract a particular color from it quite as easily as you can take Christ out of the hearts of men. Therefore, beloved, come and accept this Christ, the author and finisher of our salvation."

Not by way of embellishment, but by exhortation, let us note a few points.

I. "He is our Savior—come to take away our sins and lead us to glory and to God." There is a great preacher for you, standing in the old paths, and pointing the good way.

2. As easy to take a particular color out of a sunbeam as to take Christ out of the hearts of men. Beautiful and strong illustration. I have no faith in the religion of the man who is for Christ one minute and the devil the next. Very doubtful case. When men are converted, saved by Christ, it to my mind seems impossible that they should desire fellowship with Belial. Taking a particular color from a sunbeam would be a difficult piece of work. To take Christ out of the heart, equally so.

3. "Therefore, beloved, come and accept this Christ, the author and finisher of our salvation." The last word is a mountain of meaning. The author and finisher. Yet, men are heard to pray: "Oh Lord, help these poor penitents to work out their own salvation," when this Scripture, as interpreted, has no reference whatever to the unconverted. The words, addressed by the Apostle, were to the Christian Philippians (2:12): "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Work it out, now that you have it; "that ye may be blameless, and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Phil. 2:15.

Here, my friend, is a little present, a token of my love; will you accept it? Yes, with pleasure and thanks. Here, sinner, is a Savior, one who died for you; will you accept Him? And many say no, when to accept in this instance would have been as easy as in the matter of the token. But others do obey the voice, accept the salvation, and are happy; and know that Christ is in them all the time helping them to work out their salvation; and thereby they shine as lights in the world. "Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully." "And Jesus said, this day is salvation come to this house." Did this Publican work it out before he got it? Sinner, come down; Jesus is ready.

A WOMAN AND HER PRIDE.

Prov. 13:10. "An high look and a proud heart is sin." 21:4. "Every one that is proud is an abomination to the Lord." 16:5. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matt. 6:15.

Here it is. Pride stirs strife and continues contention. It is sin, violated law. The possessor of it is an abomination in the sight of God. It is a barrier in the way of life. It causes an offended one to say, I will never forgive that man nor that woman. It is then certain when such an one prays the Lord's prayer the act is mockery.

Here is a letter from a woman who has been passing through great trials. I know her well, and in quoting part of the letter, I make no breach of confidence. No woman with similar spirit can read it without interest, and I trust, not without profit. I know the writer has suffered. I know she was wronged, dreadfully so, by one who should have kept her hand on her mouth. The offended and maligned woman had said, "I will never forgive her." She writes:

"I received your book. I wish I could tell you how I enjoyed reading it, and how much good it did my soul. If able I would send you \$25 for it, or even more than that. It came to me like a message from God. I was in a great conflict with the devil, as I call it now. Pride over a matter I will tell you about.....It takes much to arouse my anger; but when it is, it becomes hard for me to forgive an injury.....I received a letter of apology and your book at the same time. It liked to have killed me. I did wish she hadn't done that, as I could not see how I could ever look over the insult. I became so nervous and worked up over it, I could hardly stand it; for I knew it was my duty to forgive. But could I, and mean it? (Noble woman.) After I talked with my husband, I could not decide; and he went to sleep. Then I took your book and read and read till 1 o'clock. I felt worse

nd worse about not being willing to forgive. I tried to
nd a place in there where there would be an excuse for
ny case; but not one. The more I read the more I was
it. I could only think of myself as the proud and elder
brother of the prodigal; and still could not consent to
oop to forgive her. But by the time I was through
eading, and praying, my heart was softened some; and I
went to bed with an aching head. I prayed God to give
me grace to overcome the proud spirit by morning. It
ame and found me still rebellious. (My, wasn't she hav-
ing a conflict?) I felt mean, and also sorry for my little
children. I grabbed the book again. Read through it;
nd some of the places over and over again. I got on my
knees once more, and prayed till I was assured that God
ad given me grace to forgive her, and strength to trample
that proud spirit under my feet. I feel like a new wo-
man now, and shall always fight the proud spirit. I want-
d to tell you how much good the book did me. I needed
ome one to urge me and convict me of sin. And now I
m so thankful that I can say, truthfully, for I always
ated a lie, I forgive you." Brothers and sisters, she had
bitter, bitter struggle; but she won the fight. Blessed,
oble, glorious woman, though hundreds of miles from
me, I feel the presence of your spirit of self-sacrifice hov-
ring around me as I write these lines. You have won
he crown of victory, in which shine, with resplendent lus-
tre, the jewels of humility. You have forgiven a trespass,
nd "your heavenly Father will forgive you." The dis-
cretion of man deferreth his anger, and it is glory to pass
ver a transgression. Prov. 19:11. "He that is slow to
nger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his
pirit than he that taketh a city." Prov. 16:32.

The successful ones described in these two passages
re the true heroes and heroines of earth.

It takes more real courage to subdue and rule one's
wn spirit, in the matter of forgiveness of injury, than
does to go forth into sanguinary warfare. You have

the music and the cause, for which you fight, to urge you on in the latter; but in the former only the command of God. That is enough; but how few, comparatively, obey it, and fight selfishness, and gain the greatest of all victories.

DON'T TAKE SKIMMED MILK.

"As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." I. Peter 2:2.

Anything that one loves that is what he is likely to use. If he has tasted that the Lord is gracious he will feed himself largely from the supplies furnished by his heavenly Father. He will not spend money for that which is not bread; nor will he labor for that which satisfieth not. Men who wish to have nourishing food will patronize only those who give the best. This is specially true as to the milk they drink. They do not want it with the cream off. Skimmed milk, it is said, is good as a diuretic; but for the purpose of strength it helps but little. If anything appears in this department of The Observer that is not worth reading, it is in no sense a product of skimmed milk. I drink about six pints per day; but my wife is sufficiently well acquainted with me to know that I do not take it skimmed. And it is the indispensable requisite to my physical existence. Likewise the sincere milk of God's word is necessary to my complete equipment. The "Grand Old Man," who has recently breathed his last, would have never been the great character that he was in life had it not been for the "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," from which he has, all his life, imbibed the sincere milk of the word that made him one of full stature long years ago, and gave him the right to the honorable title, "Grand Old Man." Those who love the Bible will draw from it, read it, mark it, digest it, live it, prove it. Don't tell me that the Word of God is a precious book to you when you are more filled with the latest

novel than you are of it. Such a statement is not in accordance with the facts in the case. There are lots of professors of religion to-day that any jury, selected at random, would find "not guilty" of being Christians without leaving the box. Their lives are in evidence against their professions. If you grow strong as Christians the pure milk is essential. If the preacher doesn't give it to you go to the dairy house and draw for yourselves. You will be surprised at the interest taken in the Book by yourself, when you look at it, and read it, because of your fondness for it.

The desires of new-born babes after milk are ardent, strong and impatient. As a new-born babe, when pinched with hunger or parched with thirst, manifests such an eagerness to obtain milk, so also should every child of grace evince a similar disposition by his love to and searching after the milk of the Word; "desire it," saith the Apostle, "that ye may grow thereby;" feed on it, that ye may be strengthened by it. Nothing can satisfy the cravings of an infant like milk; neither will anything satisfy the Christian but Christ; hence he searches the Word that testifies of Him. John 5:39. The infant desires the milk just as nature has prepared it; so does the believer "desire the sincere milk of the Word," without the least adulteration of art, eloquence, or any other mixture of men. Psalms 19:7-8. The desires of a natural babe are accompanied with endeavors to obtain the milk. A sight of the breast, merely, would not satisfy, but rather increase its desires. And such are the active desires of a sincere Christian after the Word of God, that they can never be satisfied without it. Whenever you hear the Word, "take heed how ye hear," lest what you obtain be skimmed milk, which has been deprived of its nourishing and strengthening qualities. Mind that nothing is taken from it. See that it is not "watered milk." There is a curse and a woe upon any man who takes from or adds to it. A colored Baptist minister who was cutting

wood for me last winter said: "Mr. John, don't you believe that the Master wants us to preach just the Bible, His Word?" "That's right, Sidney," was the reply. "Well," he continued, "I can't read it much, but Susie can. She reads me a few verses every now and then. These I try to remember and preach to the darkeys on Sunday." I told him that was the way to do; and when he preached what Susie read to him out of that Book he was proclaiming what the Apostle instructed us all, through his Epistle to Timothy, to preach. So great is Sidney's desire for the Word that on every opportunity he has Susie to read it to him. Sidney is a good negro, and there is no discount on his religion, or Susie's either.

When will this be? "They shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah, 2:4. When will this time come! Would that it were here now. Of course the prophet knew what he was talking about, but judging from the present situation of affairs, the time is far in the future. And if our country is to receive no aid from the people whom she desires to assist the conflict must necessarily be prolonged. The words of the general that it would all be over in two weeks were not spoken in jest; but certainly, they do not appear now to have been the truth. We are all trusting in the Lord that He is on the American side. He is, if that is the right side. But when the greatest Christian nation on the face of the earth picks up the sword and goes into a war, that may, in time, involve all the world, it looks as if the time for the fulfillment of the text is far away. I am not writing in a spirit of criticism, but only to prove that the present surroundings indicate that the time when the people will learn to war no more has not come. Would to God it had. The English papers said months ago that there would be disasters on the sea, but nothing to compare with what would be when the American army faced 100,-

ooo Spanish soldiers on the island of Cuba. And especially is this likely to be true when we do not know as a fact that the insurgents will be of material aid to the country which goes to Cuba as the good Samaritan. Has, or did the government count the cost?

SUCCESSFUL RELIGIOUS WORK.

Evangelist R. V. Miller, Asheville, who has been conducting a series of religious services in Charlotte during the past week, is making a success of the work to which he devotes himself. The fact that he does succeed is due to one thing, mainly, preaching the word. It is my conviction that any man possessed of common sense and true religion, which is always accompanied with a baptism of the Holy Spirit, will be successful at all times and among all classes in the work of the Lord. The wisdom of man is foolishness with God, therefore, it becomes necessary if a preacher leads men to Christ, that he be forgetful of himself. The greatest salvation is that which does save a man from self. It has been a pleasure to me to meet Mr. Miller during the past week, and to talk with him on things pertaining to the kingdom. Of course, parts of the doctrine he preaches do not always please the orthodox, but like John the Baptist, when he told Herod that he was out of order in living with his brother's wife and lost his head in consequence of such preaching, so in this day, the preacher, who comes red-hot before the people with the word, "Thou art the man," etc., in the John the Baptist and Nathan style, will be apt, occasionally, to raise the dust. The Word of God is mighty penetrating. The Chinaman said he was down on the Bible because the Bible was down on him. The Chinaman is not the only fellow who shows a lack of appreciation. But, after all, the people, generally, esteem the Word itself more than they do pyrotechnics. The gentleman with whom I am

a guest asked his wife if she had told the boy to rub the horse down, to which she replied, "Yes, and told him to rub him up too." That's a good idea. Rubbing the people just one way all the time makes them think too highly of self. When you rub the other way they may kick a little, but that will be over after awhile. Some folks would not enjoy this world at all if they didn't kick occasionally. They usually quit it some time. Jesus Himself spoke to Paul, and said: "Saul, Saul, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." We all need to be prodded with the goad. Preaching what God commands will invariably fetch success. His Word cannot return unto Him void. It must accomplish His purpose.

"The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures,
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures."

Preach, teach, all things that are commanded, and He is with us to the end. God bless the special services being held in all parts of the city to-day.

GLAD TO GO TO CHURCH.

"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." Ps. 122:1.

It has been a long time since it was my pleasure to go to church. Being in Charlotte last Sunday morning, it was a privilege to worship at Brevard Street Church. The pastor of this congregation wrote me last winter that he and his congregation were praying for the restoration of this writer's health, and that he wanted me to wire him if my condition would justify coming to Charlotte and occupying his pulpit the next Sunday. He was expecting a rather speedy answer, and that is right, for God says: "Ask, and you shall receive," and does not say that the answer will not be immediately. But any way, enough of

prayer was answered, when on last Sunday morning the carriage came to the gate, and my host said, "Come, let us go to church." My readers, you will never fully know the joy there is in attending the service of God until you, through affliction, are deprived of the same. There are many things for which we may well be glad. But my gladness mostly on this occasion was due to the fact that I had the privilege and the ability to enter the house of the Lord. The preacher was prepared for the occasion. His text: "Brethren, pray for us." Not for him individually, but for him as the exponent of the Gospel; that it might have free course, a clear track, run and be glorified. The discourse was plain, practical, and evidently studied. He said he felt as much the importance of making the point plain, and delivering the message properly, as the Apostle who wrote the inspired words of the text. Well, I didn't see much display in the little church. There were no gaily dressed people; no show; no great amount of form. Yet, the congregation appeared to realize that this was the Lord's house, and while Satan gathers sometimes in the congregation with the Sons of God, if he was at Brevard Street Sunday morning I didn't see him. Sitting on the stand listening to the preacher and looking on the congregation, attentive and in the spirit of worship, my heart again said: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." The preacher was in earnest when he called for co-operation. "Brethren, pray for us." Do you know the great amount of good that you do, my reader, for your pastor, when he knows you are praying for him—for him, that in his hands the Word of God may not suffer, but run, have free course, and be glorified, in that sinners are saved and the saints edified and strengthened. The preacher finished his task and asked, Methodist-like, if I had anything to say. Not being in preaching trim, my words were few. But it gave me pleasure to thank the people for their interest in my welfare, and to make the statement that in

answer to their prayers I was with them one time any way. It occurred to me, however, to make the point that in order to have God ready to answer prayer the petition must be in proper condition. If God's words do not abide in the Christian, if the Christian does not abide in Christ, if knowing the commands of God and he is lacking in obedience to them; then, he might as well not ask anything, for God doesn't hear people who profess to be His followers, but don't follow. If His people, called by His name, humble themselves, turn away from sin, and pray, then He hears; otherwise, He doesn't. Iniquity in the heart of the professed child of God separates. So if we confess our sins and forsake the same, then we may come boldly to the throne of grace, and have the check drawn on this bank honored for any amount desired. Well, the services ended. And at dinner again the text was in mind. So this morning, if you will repent of all sin and pray that God may be with your preacher in the service, it will be answered; your preacher will be helped; you will have more of your Master's character and disposition; and likely, say with truth: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." Suppose you try it, and note how you feel when you return home from the house of the Lord.

THE EVERLASTING ARMS.

“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”—Deut. 33: 27.

Art thou sunk in depths of sorrow
Where no arm can reach so low?
There is One whose arms almighty
Reach beyond the deepest woe.
God the eternal is thy refuge,
Let it still thy wild alarms;
Underneath thy deepest sorrow
Are the everlasting arms.

Other arms grow faint and weary,
These can never faint nor fail;
Others reach our mount of blessing,
These our lowest, loneliest vale.
Oh, that all might know his friendship!
Oh, that all might know his charms!
Oh, that all might have beneath them
Jesus' everlasting arms.

“Underneath us”—oh, how easy!
We have not to mount on high,
But to sink into the fullness
And in trustful weakness lie.
And we find our humbling failures
Save us from the strength that harms;
We may fail, but “Underneath us
Are the everlasting arms.”

Arms of Jesus! fold me closer
To thy strong and loving breast,
Till my spirit on thy bosom
Finds its everlasting rest;
And, when Times' last sands are sinking,
Shield my heart from all alarms,
Softly whispering—“Underneath Thee
Are the everlasting arms.”

—Exchange.

SPOTS, WRINKLES, BLEMISHES.

Brethren, I call your attention to Ephesians 5:25: "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

That He has been unable thus far to make such presentation of His idea of a church goes without saying. This fact all will admit. Failure to attain His ideal is not to be attributed to fault in Him, nor to the means available to every sect of Christians to meet the desired end. That the Apostle Paul saw spots on the early church none will deny. Without depreciating the good accomplished by the church, we must not close our eyes to the blemishes. To see the spots on the sun, it being so far away, a glass is necessary. To see them on the church, it being so near us, magnifying power is unnecessary. The idea in preaching, as some one recently remarked, is not so much to fetch new teaching out of the Bible as it is to keep the people reminded of the old. And I fear that this duty is often forgotten, as preachers conceive the idea that they must give the people something that will be spoken of as a deep and profound discourse. The story of redemption is couched in language that makes it beautiful for its simplicity. The man whose only desire is to preach a "big sermon" is a wrinkle seen and known of all men. We should owe men nothing but to love them. We often exhibit our love by reproof. This is given, not that we love men less, but Christ's Church more. In a verse preceding the text we read that "Christ also loved the church," and the proof of this stands out boldly in the concluding clause, "and gave Himself for it." So far as we know, but for His death there would have been no Christian Church. And because His blood was the purchase price, He wants it to be holy and without blemish. This is a reasonable desire. He loves the church as man loves, or ought to love, his wife. He speaks of the church as His bride. It would be difficult to think of a beautiful bride as impure

in heart or life. But the church is spotted. Why? There are many causes. Sometimes it may be the preacher. When this is true it puts a fearful stain on the body of Christ. The earlier the body is rid of such a member the better for the body.

But my purpose just now is to make mention of the official members whose life is of a character damaging to Zion. What character does the law of the church, based on the Word of God, require in an official member? Look, if you please, on page 87, Discipline, question 2. Note the answer: "Let the stewards be men of solid piety." The law must mean what it says. I take this official not in a personal, but in a representative capacity of the entire body of officials. It is important that all be solid in piety; but especially that it be manifested in the lives of the men who constitute the official contingent. It will not be out of tune to charge that imperfections and blemishes are due to the fact that these brethren—no omnibus bill—are frequently so derelict in the performance of known duties that the church suffers in consequence. Official members are supposed to be guides and examples. Nothing cripples the church more than men of questionable character and known violators of good morals. If men like these are kept in office when will Christ make the desired presentation of the text? Never! The law ought to be changed so that the preacher may not be required to do the nominating. The present law is often a source of great embarrassment to him. For instance, the fourth quarterly conference elects the stewards. The next year a new preacher comes to the work and finds certain men in official positions, and for illustrative purpose will say he finds some offending one or more of the following points:

1. Does not attend the official meetings and appears to take little interest in the management of the affairs of the church.
2. Does not attend the preaching of the Word regu-

larly; often at other churches, and allows trivial excuses to keep him away from his own.

3. Never seen at the week night prayer-meetings.
4. Does not subscribe to his own church paper.
5. Never has a religious service with his family, and fails to instruct his children in the Bible and doctrines of the church.
6. Sends his children to dancing school—not for God's glory, but thinks they may thereby become more graceful or get better positions in society.
7. Drinks privately and sometimes publicly, and not always in moderation.
8. Curses or swears when provoked.
9. Member and officer of club at summer resort where great balls are given in the name of the club.
10. Engaged directly or indirectly in the sale of liquor.
11. Renting property for the liquor business or other immoral purposes.
12. Retailing smutty anecdotes. (I heard on one occasion a leading church official tell a joke of this character that made me blush to the rim of my ear.)
13. Creating obligations with no probability of being able to discharge them, and knowing it at the time.

The preacher well knows that retaining a man who may be guilty of any of the foregoing counts is damaging to the cause of Christ and puts spots on the church; and yet, forsooth, probably, in consequence of the wealth or family connection, the preacher is told that such a man must be continued in office. And, contrary to conviction, he re-nominates him. One preacher was heard to remark that a certain man was put in because the other official members desired it. This man cared nothing specially for Methodism. If the quarterly conference and a circus were billed for the same hour it was a well known fact that he would be at the circus. If the church is to become what Christ wants certainly her preachers and official

members must be pure and holy men. A bad man in a conspicuous church relation is damaging in results not easily computed. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

CHRIST'S CHURCH.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:17-18.

A valued friend writes: "I am pleased with your article, 'Baptized for the Dead.' I don't recollect reading any commentary on that passage of Scripture. (I. Cor. 15:29.) I should like some comments of yours on Matt. 16:18-19. The 19th verse reads thus: 'And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'"

My views are, in this as on other portions of the Scripture, based on the words themselves. It was a momentous time in the history of Christ when he put the question direct: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" There were various answers. But Peter having a revelation from heaven replied (not the Son of Man): "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ includes in His reply: "Thou art Peter." That was enough for Peter; and from him He switches when He says: "Upon this rock" (what rock? Why Christ Himself) "I will build My Church;" not Peter's. The cornerstone of the Christian Church was laid that day. Eph. 2:20. "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." "My opinion upon the verses" (18 and 19), says

my friend, "is that they mean just what they say." So say I. He goes on: "Peter began to build the Christian Church and was a successful builder. See Acts 2nd chapter. See reference Eph. 2:20. He, Peter, was not the corner-stone." Of course not. "The Scriptures do not require any support from man." Certainly not. That's preaching by a layman.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." "This declaration of our Lord," says Dr. Clarke, "was literally fulfilled to Peter, as he was made the first instrument of opening; i. e., preaching the doctrines of the kingdom of heaven to the Jews. Acts 2:41. And to the Gentiles. Acts 10:44-47; 11:1; 15:7." Very good and clear. And the remaining portion of this 19th verse means that anything Peter did in the name of Christ upon whom the Church was to be built, would meet with divine endorsement. And to say this is in no sense a leaning to Popery; and therefore, an attempt to ignore the fact that this 19th verse means exactly what it says is erroneous, according to my view. I further agree with my correspondent when he concludes: "You know that the Apostles had supernatural powers given to them, which was withheld from all who took up their work. This being so, the verses mean what they say." We might remark, incidentally, that this conclusion is an effective blow at Christian science, faith cures, etc., as these stand in opposition to the well known laws of nature, the law of the Lord, which is perfect. The day of miracles passed with the passing away of the original disciples.

The Church of Christ, however, continues to grow; and as Peter was a builder, so likewise is every believer. The unbeliever is in the Church, but he is out of place; and that is why the Church is spotted. He thinks sometimes, especially when there has been a big ingathering, that he had something to do with it; and with an expression similar to that of the man whose wife killed the bear and who said, "See what me and my wife done," he points out what

we Christians have done. But the unbeliever is no Christian, but a stranger and a foreigner in the household of faith. The humble, confessed followers of Christ make the Church; they "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. 2:19 et seq. "This rock" upon which the Church is built is the sure foundation. All the powers of hell, including the infidel, the scoffer, sceptic, agnostic, etc., etc., will avail nothing in opposing the Gospel. So long as Christ lives the Church will move on; but she needs to part company with the unbelievers in order to be ready for the coming of the Bridegroom. The "whipper-snappers," who say the Church is going to the devil, make random remarks. The Church herself is all right; but the wicked on the inside are of their father, the devil; and the works of their father they do. Let them repent.

HOW ARE WE SAVED?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith." Eph. 2:8.

Grace is a large word. It has many meanings. Here it has but one. Webster's definition: "The free, unmerited love and favor of God, the spring and source of all the benefits men receive from Him." It includes the entire plan of the atonement. A comprehensive definition, as it applies spiritually, would be the help of God. The grace of God is ample, but not sufficient in itself to salvation without faith. This is of the greatest importance. Without it we cannot please God. We propose to have more to say concerning faith than grace. There is abundance of the latter but a scarcity of the former. A distinguished minister once read to me a treatise of his on faith, and stated, egotistically, I thought, that his definition was entirely different from any he had ever seen or heard. The best I have ever known on faith is faith. It is rather dangerous to mix it with much theology. I

think every one has a pretty fair idea of the word; but still there are comparatively few in this dispensation possessing it as the force which has brought personal salvation. Through faith man is saved. In what way does it come to him?

1st. "Faith cometh by hearing." If you propose to enter into some business enterprise, and in which you wish to get capital invested to aid in the consummation of the same, you must have the ability to state your plan in such manner as will enlist or induce men of means to have faith in it. This they cannot have until they have heard. Men will hear your plan, and may or may not have faith. So it is in the matter of salvation. Some hear and have faith to believe, and are saved; others hear and do not believe, and are condemned.

2nd. Hearing what? "And hearing by the Word of God." It is hearing His Word that brings us faith which is the gift of God. "It is not five well-formed words from an eloquent tongue that produces faith, but the Word of God, the important and all-concerning truths of the Gospel of Christ, in their native dress, brought home to the hearts and consciences of those who hear them." "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of the power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." I. Cor. 2:4-5. Men will hear preaching, of a character not like that of which Paul was a type, and then go away without faith in Christ, because they have not heard "the Word of God;" but an essay, couched in the enticing words of man's wisdom, and having upon it no baptism with the Holy Spirit, it was without power to the unconverted and back-slidden to Christ. The right kind of hearing must be "by the Word of God." When I open my Bible, I, through faith as I read, feel that what I am taking in, is the very Word of God; and therefore, when reading such passages as my text and others similar in import, I

know, because I believe them, I am saved. "By grace through faith." I have heard a man say he knew he was saved by reason of a curious good feeling in his breast. Well, it doesn't strike me that way. Last night about 1 o'clock I had a fearful night-mare, and when I awoke the feeling, in my breast or chest, was terrible, and of such a nature as to make me believe, had I been going by that kind of evidence, "feeling in the breast," that the old boy had me for a fact, and was going to let me ride to his dark regions on one of the night-mares. But my wife rubbed my chest where there was so much pain, and directly the circulation started again, and I was all right; and rose this morning ready to commence my work for God and humanity, knowing myself to be saved, for the reason that I heard the Word and believed it. That "feeling in the breast" theology doesn't have much weight with me. For hours sometimes in a day the feeling in that department of the writer's anatomy is anything else than curiously good. "By grace are ye saved through faith." "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

3rd. How are we to hear it? Mainly by the way of the pulpit. "How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith: "Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10:15 et seq. This being true, how important that what the people hear be the Word of God. Standing one day at the depot in Asheville, engaged in conversation with a friend, I was startled by him excitedly taking hold of my arm and at the same time crying: "Lookout! Brother Troy." The shifting engine was nearly upon me, and in a minute, but for the friend's timely interference, my body would have been crushed to death.

God does not take hold of us exactly in that way, but his ministers are constantly, by His Word, crying to the people to look out, and entreating the unsaved to flee all unrighteousness, and be saved now. I am not one of the kind who think that the pulpit has lost its power. On the contrary, the Word of God is being preached in its simplicity and purity; but I am not blind to the fact that many churches, with their paid choirs, tremendous organs, operatic singing, are, I fear, depending more upon these attractions than they do upon the Word itself, which should come straight, red hot, and direct from the fountain. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard." Rom. 10:13 et seq. The idea of going to church and not hearing anything from the Word is an incongruity. I often see sermons which to me are conspicuous only for the fact that they have in them nothing of the "Thus saith the Lord." I do not object to musical instruments and correct and spiritual singing, but do protest against these things being used as of a greater power of attraction than the Word itself. The preacher, who knows God, who has become acquainted with Him by daily intercourse, will "preach the Word," for he knows nothing else. But if he spends his time in reading other matter than the Word, how can he possess the ability to preach it? I hear people sometimes trying to talk on subjects of which they know nothing, and every word uttered is suggestive of perfect emptiness. It is pitiable to watch them.

My Bible is full of God's Word, which tells me how to live and how not to live; how to talk and how not to talk; when to speak and when not to speak; what to drink and eat, and what not to drink and eat; what to hear and what not to hear; what to love and what not to love; what is law and what is not law. No question bearing upon any line of thought or action, but what is settled in full to

date by the Word of God. We preachers, licensed or unlicensed by ecclesiastical authority, in the pulpit or out of the pulpit, should preach it in every word, act and thought, and then they who come in contact with us will hear it, even if it is not spoken; and the result, many who have no faith now will discover that religion is a fact not to be discounted.

But my reader, whoever you are, remember that if you be wanting in faith you are no good. Make the law of God the rule of life. "But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only," is my parting injunction.

CHRIST CAME TO SAVE YOU.

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." I. Tim. 1:15.

These words were not the wild mutterings of a crazy man, but the utterance of truth and soberness by one who had been called of God to preach to a lost world the riches of the Gospel of salvation. And there can be no salvation apart from this way, so simple that any may understand who desire to know it. The plan of salvation cannot be improved on by any substitute of man. It is perfect, provided by God Himself. The world is full of sin and sinners. Christ came as the cure for the hereditary disease, sin, and to save the sinner. In consequence of sin the world is full of sadness and misery and death. Humanity is frail, and every day the bell is tolling; the mourners go about the street, and the crape hangs on the door. There must be a remedy for all this woe to which humanity has been subjected, and there is. The Balm of Gilead and the Great Physician to administer the same are here, and no patient afflicted with the dread disease of sin has ever failed of cure when he faithfully took the medicine. He is a fool who in the hour of grief and trouble and sickness

unto death, refused the only certain remedy ever offered the race of mankind. The Gospel of Jesus is needed now more than ever. The time has come upon us when men are filled with all manner of sin and wickedness, and if they ask for a remedy give them nothing but the Gospel of Christ. If they believe it, they will live it, and are saved. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." Indicative mood and present tense. You don't need to wait until you die to enjoy the goodness of God; you may be baptized, sprinkled and immersed, with it now. Christ came to save you. He walked a bloody pathway to accomplish this great end, and the man who will not follow His steps is gone, and he is gone now. He that believeth not shall be damned. And millions, even among what are called Christians, prove by their lives that they are not believers. and, therefore, they are not saved, but lost. There is but one way, sinner. This is the Gospel that Paul preaches, and if I copy from any man, let it be from him or other of the Apostles. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Try it.

WHEN WILL HE SAVE YOU? NOW!

"Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." II. Cor. 6:12.

This ought to make us all glad and fill us with exceeding great joy. It always makes me tired to hear one calling on God to save him at last. Save me now, is my cry, and the last days will be all right. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." A heart that is hardened will finally stop the ear to the voice of God. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near."

HE PROMISES TO KEEP YOU.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6.

When He has saved you, rest assured that He can and will keep you to the end. Don't be uneasy that you are going to fall from grace. There is not much comfort in doubting the ability of God to perform His promises. There are many things in which you may, justifiably, have no confidence, but this one thing, God's ability to keep unto the end, you may be confident of. You may not always know exactly what a woman is going to say, or what a politician is going to do for humanity; for even the greatest of all the earth is not infallible, but God is sure. If I did not know it I would not declare nor preach it. The doctrine is a wonderful one; call it final perseverance, or what not, it is full of comfort and assurance. If God has begun a good work in you He will finish it. The true Christian is never doubtful as to forgiveness. He is never doubtful as to the impression he may make on others. Some may misunderstand him, because they wish to do so, but God made him to shine, and shine somewhere he will, and God is glorified, and in the midst of the storm of life He stands. As the house which is built on the rock, so is He. "Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." Rom. 14:4.

We notice further that the promise is to keep one secure until the "day of Jesus Christ. The blessed Savior has not really yet had His day. But it is coming, if the word of prophecy is true. He is still rejected and despised of men, but His day is coming on. The world recently has been stirred by notable events; the next may be the actual coming of Christ for His bride. And they, who now are saved, are going to be kept until that day; whether they be alive or in their graves, it makes no difference. He says we shall be kept, and I am ashamed of any Christian who doesn't believe this word. "Kept by the power

of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." I. Peter 1:5. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24. It is a plain case. Are you satisfied? Are you saved? If not, why not be to-day? I leave the matter with you. May God own and bless this word which I preach in His name, and for humanity's sake. Amen.

THE BEST THING TO DO—FOLLOW JESUS.

"Lord, I will follow Thee." Luke 9:61.

When Christ came to the earth in the form of humanity, He came to prove that even in this life a man might be good. His words, to men whom He met as He passed along, were: "Follow Me." Had they done so the murder of Christ would not have been a part of history. This murder was diabolical in detail; it was premeditated, malicious, and willful. Men in that day would have been saved had they followed Him. It is the same in this day. Wise and sensible is the one who says, "Lord, I will follow Thee;" and does it. But the man who will attempt to do other things inimical to this is not in the line of following. One said, "but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." Jesus said unto him, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." No man will ever be a faithful follower who would make the Lord's business secondary. Following Jesus means crucifixion. Death to self and love abundant for Him and His cause. Naturally a man does not want to follow. The life of Jesus Christ cuts the natural man up; and when the man fully understands Christ, and gets himself together, or in other words, has come to himself, he finds he is a new creature. Personal, absolute, daily, hourly following Christ is what makes Christianity. Any-

thing else, even if the Church demands it, is a sham and a fraud. A church rule, a church creed, resolutions by church bodies are not binding upon the individual if they in any sense interfere with the freedom of the individual to follow Him.

1. Christianity is not a book or bundle of tactics. It is a great regenerating force. It makes man a new creature. If in Christ he places all his trust, and becomes His follower, old things have passed away and all things have become new.

2. The individual Christian life is not a man-made form or programme but personal loyalty to Jesus Christ. Wherever He calls to go we go. The same loyalty that the soldier gives to his country in time of war the Christian soldier gives to the Captain of his salvation. Remember my friends that personal loyalty to Jesus is the evidence that you follow Him, and mean what you say when declaring: "Lord, I will follow Thee." The Christian doesn't wear a collar nor anything else save the yoke of Jesus. The following of Christ must be complete. Are you loyal to the Captain? Don't be afraid of ecclesiasticism only when you permit it to be crammed in you and dominate your life. "Follow me." Be loyal to Him who used these words, and you are saved now.

3. If personal loyalty to Christ is salvation then He must be able to meet every want in my life for time and eternity. And He is able to save and to keep you saved. No school, no polity, no anything, can do for you what Christ can and will do. No man ever fell who really was following Christ. He must look back before he ceases to be a follower.

God help everyone of us. God help us all to yield ourselves to Him, and to make it our every day life, to follow Him.

A young woman stood before the altar. The priest stood in his magnificent robes with book in hand. "Daughter," said he, "will you promise to believe all that

the fathers have said and that the creeds teach?" To which she blushingly answered: "I will follow only Him." Again the ecclesiastic put the same question, to which she made the same reply: ."I will follow only Him." Oh, my reader, is that what you say? Jesus will carry you through.. You can't fail when He leads. Then tell Him to-day: " Lord I will follow Thee."

"Sweetly Lord have we heard Thee calling, come follow Me."
And we will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

SUPPLEMENT.

SCHOOL DAYS AT HILLSBORO.

"The memory of things precious keepeth warm the heart that doth own them." This quotation appeared in a letter, from an old friend, recently received. And others have written and asked that I would write again of the old days of Hillsboro. In the early fall of 1874 I left Fayetteville, my home, in company with Geo. D. Baker, to go to Horner and Graves' School. The school in that day, as in the past, and as at present, conducted at Oxford by two sons of the late Mr. Horner, had a great reputation. Soon after arriving at the barracks I was shown to a room on the third floor. Directly I was introduced to a young man by the name of Robert Winston. He immediately gave me some orders, but in a dignified, gentlemanly manner. I could not understand, exactly, why he should give me orders, especially as he was a boy no older, apparently, nor larger than myself. While not appealing to Caesar, I did appeal to some of the older boys as to why I should obey, and was quickly informed that he was the sergeant major, a superior officer, and I must obey him. I did so. My first lesson in soldiering. I was a "rat," as they called me, and needed information. And that night when they blacked my face I understood freely the term "rat." That young sergeant major is now one of our leading citizens, and a shining example of the character of the teaching of the school mentioned. The teaching there certainly made a lasting impression on this young man's mind; so, likewise, did one of Mr. Horner's daughters.

Here, during my student days, I became acquainted with more than 100 boys, representatives of leading fami-

lies in different sections of the State. It has been nearly 25 years since those days, but the impression still abides. Many of the boys have gone over the river and are waiting for those who will meet them later on. To Jim Nicholson, Geo. Baker, Walter Moore, Fenner Stickney, Sidney Wood, Peter Ihrie and the others of that noble band, who have crossed the bar, I pause to pay a tribute of affectionate remembrance. You left us early in the flush of manhood and usefulness. But your old school mates still hold your memory dear. Some of us are near the bar, and we hope to meet you face to face when we have entered the harbor of the eternal rest.

The living have not failed to do something for their State, and reflect in their lives the value of the training received at the old barracks. It would require too much space to write all their names, but I could easily call the roll. In law, medicine, the ministry, the school room, agriculture, manufacturing, merchandising, you will find them standing in the front rank and making full proof of their ability to cope with the issues of life, in the world's broad field of battle. I, your fellow student, have almost fought the fight; but the dark days are often driven out of memory, and thoughts of past associations bring to me the sight of golden flashes athwart the clouds that have come over my life. Of course you remember Mr. Horner. How he praised the student who came to recitation giving evidence of diligence in his study. How hard he hit the lazy and unprepared. It was like encountering a tornado. They thought him hard, but he was not. One day he made me thoroughly ashamed for coming unprepared. He had done so before, and then I made up my mind to change. The next morning I was ready. A question was missed by three or four above me. I was near the foot, but my time had come, and I rattled it off: "Many verbs compounded with these prepositions: ad, ante, con, in, inter, ob, post, prae, pro, sub and super, are followed by the dative." I redeemed myself, and can

never forget the feeling of exultation when he cried out: "That's right, Troy, take 'em down, take 'em down." The student's pride in making a creditable recitation was no greater than that of the preceptor; and he took special delight in showing it in such words as: "Take 'em down, take 'em down." But my, how badly the fellow felt when he was told: "If you don't get to doing better you'll be an utter shipwreck." A boy with brains and a teacher has no excuse for lack of preparation. Jack Scott wrote me from Graham some time ago that he wanted me to give the boys something about the old days, and that is what I am trying to do.

To you boys, one and all, who are so busy in your places, serving by the will of God your generation well, likely you do not often have time to think of the past. But, perhaps, in the quiet of your own home, surrounded by the family, sometimes memory will take you back through the vista of the past to those happy days. Hand in hand with memory, I often find myself going back to Hillsboro, walking the galleries, walking guard, going to the mess hall, to the chapel for prayer, to Billy Bingham's and Abel Payne's for fried chicken, gravy and hot biscuit; Sunday mornings going in town to church, where we always found an attraction more potent than the preacher, and where we would forget to "keep eyes to the front," as the major enjoined was military law and must be observed; and last, but not least, on Friday night, once monthly, going to the reception at the "Select School for Young Ladies," at which time the dog was chained, and we dreadful boys permitted to promenade and talk with the girls. We would speak of our lonesomeness in the old barracks, and but for the fact that we had the pleasant anticipation of the coming receptions we would surely die. Why, of course, lots of boys die of that kind of heart trouble. And then, do you not remember the boy who was so much in love; of course all were in this fix, with one of the fair maidens? How ardent he was, but she declined

to accept the proffer to live and die for her; but how at last she yielded, his persistent wooing of her winning the heart of the fair one; and do you remember his happiness when he received the answer, by the grape vine telegram, to another girl at the end of the line, "Tell him he may have for his answer anything he likes, even if it's yes." And after all, it didn't turn out as the novels do. For he married another woman and she another man. But the truth is stranger than fiction, anyway.

In conclusion, let me say to you of 1874 and '75 that some day you ought to have a re-union at the old barracks. If "Zack" is dead and, consequently, not able to beat the drum, why, come on Jack Scott. He was a good drummer, and he wrote me that he would be glad to make it rattle again. Lon Jones, I believe, was the last first sergeant. Have him on hand to call the roll. Some of the boys will not answer, but they are not here, for God took them. Lon stepped in to see me a few days ago. He called the roll, and as he did so my eyes were swimming in tears. And while writing to-day about the departed ones the tears come again. My little girl went in the kitchen and said to her mother: "Papa is in yonder writing a dead letter." But if I cannot be at the re-union in the body I will be there in the spirit; and when my name is called Charlie Holt or Julian Baker may answer for me. But let me tell you, if you do go into camp again, don't roll any rocks on the gallery.

Now, boys, many of you, I know, read *The Observer*, and these random, desultory remarks have been written especially for you. Much of my life is spent in thinking on the past, though I do not permit these thoughts to persuade me that there is not something for me to do in the present. But for me the tide is at its ebb, not flow, and my ship is sailing out, but I am not nervous, neither am I afraid. The Pilot knows best, and He will guide the bark. We cannot see Him, but let us believe anyway that He is on the ship. It would cheer me on the voyage to

hear from you often, and to know that you can stand the storm. It is a great pleasure to know for a fact that many of you are on board. If the chart, by which we sail, is true, we will not be wrecked, but some day meet face to face when our ships have reached the port. The best hope is that which is laid in Him. Certainly there can be none better. He is my hope. I have nothing else to commend me to His favor except that He died, the just, for the unjust. Wherever in the old State you may be, I send these words of affectionate remembrance; and close with this benediction:

“God be with you till we meet again,
By His counsel guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you,
God be with you till we meet again.”

CHAPEL HILL IN '75 AND '76.

In a letter just received from an old schoolmate, now a prominent physician, I note these words: “I read your contributions to The Observer, and was particularly pleased with your letter about the Hillsboro boys, and wondered how you remembered your Chapel Hill days. You were a pretty careless fellow then, but are all right now, and all of us believe in you and in the grace which has made you whole.” Any apparent lack of modesty by quoting these kind words will be excused by my readers when I say that it has been my intention to write of Chapel Hill for some time, and that these words have been appointed as a starter. He is right when he speaks of me as a “careless fellow” in those days, for all of which I am profoundly regretful, but the pain in consequence of the remembrance of incorrect life and methods is modified by the words following the fact stated. And other letters touch me deeply, which speak of all unpleasant things as being forgiven and forgotten. And somehow, this kind of preaching, from the Chapel Hill boys, appears to me as

the stuff which one might decide to be the outcome of Christian education. For what is it after all but being what Christ was and doing what He did? I have given you an example. And to all the boys of '75 and '76, who have been so mindful as to write me—and they are many—such loving and tender words of sincere sympathy, and backing the same with substantial evidence of concern for me and mine, I want to say that the beautiful expressions of solid friendship, which they have shown to their "careless" old school-fellow, have been the means of strengthening his faith in God, and of making me decide that when our immortal friend, Oliver Goldsmith—I believe it was—he wrote:

"And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
A shade which follows wealth or fame
And leaves the wretch to weep?"

he must have been suffering with dyspepsia or something else that convinced him that the world was a howling wilderness. The old man was off. My career, it is true, has been a checkered one, impelled, it seems at times, by fate to make mistakes, sad and serious ones, yet the world has been good and kind to me, and God has been good, and His mercy endureth forever. I have had neither fame nor riches, and according to the poet, I would, necessarily, be "the wretch to weep;" but such is not true, for friendship, which puts its strong arm under the weak, still abides, evidenced by such as this: "John, if there is anything I can do for you let me know;" and all of this is due to that grace, as Ike writes, "which has made you whole and all of us believe in you." Bless God for that. "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love." I bless the day, when in the providence of God, I was permitted to come in touch with the boys of my school days. When we have crossed the river and are resting on the other side this banner will still be over us. But I wanted to write something of the boys personally, and probably I had better move on. For these

reflections dim my eyes and make frequent wiping of my glasses necessary. A friend wrote: "I was greatly interested to see how your story of the old school days at Hillsboro had touched the hearts of the boys. What a rich opportunity for reaching men and helping them lies in the calling up of happy memories of the past." But I move on.

It was in the fall of 1875 when I knocked at the door of the resuscitated University. In 1872 its doors were closed and not re-opened until September, '75. The total of matriculates this first session was 69.

The old catalogue is before me, and the first name appearing on the roll is Arthur Arrington, Louisburg. Model boy in every respect. Has had some misfortunes in life, but as Dick Dillard wrote me, he always felt that Arthur was more fit for the kingdom of heaven than for earth. He is now the principal of the Jonesboro High School, and my child is one of his pupils. Charles Askew, Raleigh. Snappy Charley could play good ball and was a fine boxer. Is now living in Baltimore, and is often on the road for a paper house in Massachusetts. He is a successful business man. Julian M. Baker, Tarboro. Splendid student and could do the giant swing, but missed his hold one time. Stands to-day in the front rank of the State's physicians, and content to live at home. We are proud of him. Thad Barlow. One of the sharp kind, and that you didn't buy for a dime. Good old Thad, we all loved you. He lived at home. Fred Barrow, Jackson, N. C. Good boy. Last time I saw him in business at Norfolk. Kemp Battle, Jr. Chip of the old block. Prominent and successful physician. Charlie Bond, Windsor. He was a student of natural history, I believe you call it. He usually had a few snakes—did not drink—and other insects in his room. He studied these things. Seldom had a room-mate. Not that the boys had anything against Charlie, but they didn't like his specimens. He is a preacher, so I've been informed. The snakes never bit him. He was a good boy. That's the reason, probably.

Geo. Britt, Clinton. Steady as a clock that keeps good time. Lives at home. Ed. Bynum, Tarboro. He is dead. Ernest Caldwell, Greensboro. True as steel. Now a Presbyterian minister, and beloved by all. Aaron Capel. Good boy at school. Successful manufacturer of cotton goods, living now at Troy, N. C. "Doug" Carter. No brighter man in college. Fine orator. Now a judge of the Superior Court. Jesse Cherry, had a veritable Webster head. Good-hearted Jess. Gone the way of all the earth. His end was sad. Charlie Covington, Wilmington. As good a man as he was a boy. Everybody knows Chas. Covington. Fred and Robert Davis. Honest boys, and have made the same kind of citizens. Richard Dillard, Edenton. Genial old boy he was. Successful physician and unmarried. What a pity. John Dobson, Rockford. Full of fun; his head likewise of solid sense. He was a stump speaker from his youth up. Lawyer at Dobson, N. C. Ed. Englehard, Wilmington. A boy of fine promise. Died a few years ago in Raleigh. He was a worthy and prominent citizen. Jim Faison, Faison's. Become a lawyer, I think, and abides at his old home. Woodson Fearing, Elizabeth City. Always wearing a smile. A worthy citizen. Frank Fremont, Wilmington. The handsomest man in college, and exceedingly brilliant. The last I heard of him he was in business in Atlanta. Charles Galloway, Mt. Airy. Died in the beginning of an auspicious career at the bar. "Mack" Griffin, Elizabeth City. One of the best looking and one of the best of boys. He was very popular. Is now engaged in the banking business at his old home. Richard Henderson, Warrenton. Good boy and now a good doctor. Ed. J. Hill, Faison. We all remember Ed. A gentleman and a scholar. Now in the State of Washington. Already grown up with the country. Clifton Hunter, Enfield. Persevering student and manufacturer of scroll work. Now a railroad man. "Dink" James, Greenville. The silver tongued orator. Lawyer in Greenville. Writes me he is the same old sin-

ner, but that his wife takes care of him. I never thought him much bad. Julius Johnston, Ruffin. Still at home. Worthy student. John Lewis. Very literary in taste. Now a newspaper man at Rocky Mount. Heny Lloyd, Tarboro. Stiff in manner, but lovely and yielding in disposition. We called him "Stiffy." Now a hotel man and likely very popular. John Mallett, Chapel Hill. Honest, kind-hearted John. Very much like his father, the doctor, with whom a number of us boarded. Jim and John Manning, Pittsboro. None knew them but to love; none named them but to praise. They were model students, and to-day are model men. Both are in Durham. The former a lawyer, the latter a doctor. Of course they do well. I voted for Jim for judge. He will be on the bench one of these days if dear old North Carolina don't go to pieces. Both of these boys had all the friends they needed. Jim wrote me that he never thinks of Chapel Hill without thinking of me. The compliment in these words might be doubtful had he not enclosed something for my book. Anyway, I was fond of Jim and John. Ernest Maynard, Morrisville. Noble boy; worked hard in college, and is one man in whom there is no guile. Lawyer. George McCorkle, Newton. Full of fun and good sense. He is, I believe, in Washington City in charge of important work. The McKoy brothers, sons of the late Neill McKoy, were quiet and genial fellows. They are living in Harnett County, and helping to make the earth better. Tom McNeill, Cheraw, S. C. "Fatty" his name to his friends, and he had many. Rufus Merritt, of Pittsboro, was very useful to the boys who had sweethearts in Greensboro College. Somehow, he could get a letter through the lines and get answers from the girl. But he was also useful in other things. Van Moore, Raleigh. Haven't heard from Van in a long time. Though I doubt not he is still living, for he always took the world easy, and bid fair to live through many, many years, to a good old age. He was generous and kind. Jim Nicholson, Enfield.

Sweet spirited friend. Soon after graduating he lost his life by accidental drowning. No better boy ever lived. If any ever reached heaven Jim did. The Nixon brothers were from Perquimans. They loved each other and everybody else, and are living and making the world in their vicinity grow and blossom. Romulus Parker, Enfield. He was another favorite. He still lives in Halifax, and is a great farmer. Robert Lee Payne, Lexington. He wore his name worthily. We all know the great sorrow which came into his life. He is now practicing medicine in Norfolk. North Carolina still claims him. Joe Peele, Jackson. In all things while at school a philosopher, and the man who would tell the boys to keep off the grass. He still holds a grip on his philosophy, and usually clears his clients. He and Maynard are partners in law at Raleigh, and do fine work in their line. Will Phillips, son of Dr. Charles. He was great for chemistry, and at times studied this one thing 16 hours daily. He knew all about acids, but none were in his nature. He still keeps to his chemistry, and lives in Alabama. Joe Powell, Tarboro. Gentleman Joe, kind and courteous to all. Lives on his fine farm in Edgecombe, and helps to make the ground better. John Sawyer, Elizabeth City. Great talker, but always had something to say, usually closing his speech with the beautiful figure of speech, "until the earth like a mellow apple shall drop from off the wrinkled stalk of time." He continues to talk and gets paid for it. Jack Sherrod, Hamilton. Happy Jack. Full of good humor all the time. Farmer. Dave Stanback, from Richmond. He never stood back when he was needed to help make a good time. His friends were many. Henry Sloan, a quiet, good boy. Think Mr. Alexander Graham, of Charlotte, married in this family. He was from Sampson. Henry Spears, Lillington. Still resides in Harnett and a good citizen. Ed. Steele, Greensboro. Good natured Ed. Social in disposition and fond of the girls, though a bit bashful. Made a certain proposition to one and she told him to call that

evening for his answer. The pretty girl had a twin sister, just like her, and she went in, so I was informed, to give the answer—one of the name good as the same. Don't know the nature of the answer, but Ed. married another girl. We know not what an hour may bring forth in matters like these. Ed. is a prosperous lawyer in High Point, and belongs to the Church. Harry Stubbs, handsome boy and very bright. He has made his mark. Isaac Taylor, Chapel Hill. Ike was always funny. He couldn't help being that way. He is in the asylum now at Morganton. Giving his life to the care of the unfortunates. He stands high in the profession of medicine. His brother Jim had many friends. He is now a civil engineer and a good one. J. C. Troy, Fayetteville. He was captain of the "R. A. R." baseball nine and the leader of the glee club, and has already been referred to as a "careless fellow," but he repented a number of years ago, and is now doing the best he can under the circumstances. David Vance, Charlotte. In many respects he was like his father. As a boy, he could tell a joke that never failed to fetch a jolly laugh. Poor Dave, he went away from us it seems too soon, but he was tired. Peace be with you, my old comrade. Latimer Vaughn, Warrenton. Numa, the boys called him. He has come out at the big end of the horn, and is now a prosperous citizen of Florida. Henry Watkins, Henderson. A bright boy. Now living at Sanford. Frank Winston. Fat and jolly. Of course he belonged to the Glee Club. His presence always drove dull care away. He is well known to the body politic in North Carolina. His brother Robert comes next. Dignified and highly esteemed. He could make a beautiful speech, even in youth. He has been a judge, and is fitted to adorn any position his party might give him. Fenner Yarboro was a fine boy. I understand there is a mystery connected with his whereabouts. He left North Carolina years ago. I have given the names of the boys at the opening. At the following session many more came in. All have done well. Some

of course died early. It may be a few went too soon. All that I know are serving their generation well. And to these I send a prayer for their welfare. Wherever they be they doubtless think of our dear old mother, and of the days when we were happy together. Among the students who came in the next session I note the following: John Angier, Thomas Battle, David Bell, Walter Blackmer, Jim Blackwell, Rufus Bobbitt, Roscoe Briggs, Tom Brooks, Charles Burt, Clay Clifton, William Cline, Albert Coble, Locke Craig, Tom Day, Jno. Dixon, Jos. Dowd, Joe Dunlap, Tom Edmundson, Isaac Emerson—"Bromo-Seltzer"—Charles Cobb, Edgar Ewell, Henry Faison, Edward Franck, Tom Gillam, Ed. Glenn, Geo. Greene, Jno. Greene, Fred Hargett, Alf. Hargrave, Ernest Haywood, Jas. Heilig, Bennett Hester, Isham Hill, William Hill, Allen Holzhauser, Robert Hughes, Alf. Jones, John Little, Isaac Long, Robert Martin, Charles McNeill, George Means, (the wagon elevator at the "Di" Building) Jim Moore, Paschal Norfleet, Ed. Overman, Sam Pender, Alexander Phillips, Joe Ransom, Robt. Ransom, Ben Sharpe, Ed. Simmons, Andrew Smith, Jim Southgate, Jim Staton, Fenner Stickney, Robert Strange, Nat Street, Joshua Whedbee, Duncan Williams, and Frank Wood. Gentlemen of the jury, North Carolinians, attention! Read all the names. How do you like them? They work for and love their State. Some of them have gone home, but the majority is still with us. In the list are to be found honored men of every calling and vocation, true to God and to country. If one of them has proven disloyal to his State, in whose University they were trained, I know him not. With tar on their heels, brains in their heads, and loyalty in their hearts, you may depend upon these men to stick to North Carolina, and everything that is dear to her. And never did the "old ship" need valiant men more than now.

The University has grown from these early days, of which I write, increasing in patronage and efficiency every

year, until now it is not difficult to forecast an uninterrupted and continued progress which must be hers, inevitably. So mote it be. And to the comrades of the happy long ago, with all who may be dear to you in reverence, faith and love, I send you this "letter written unto you with mine own hand;" and to give you and yours, after all these years, the benediction of one whose great faith inspires my faith. "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." Galatians 1:3-5.

SECRET OF ODD FELLOWSHIP.

Several years ago there lived, in a little town in this State, a man, whose name it is not necessary for me to mention. He had at one time in life been worth \$10,000. But business reverses fell upon him, and he became very poor. During his prosperous days he had connected himself with a lodge of Odd Fellows. One morning it was announced on the street that the man was dead. His death had been sudden. Being somewhat proud, he had given no intimation of his true condition. His brother Odd Fellows found in the house of the dead man every evidence of abject poverty. And they went to work from that time to do what God requires as a duty to our fellow. A widow and four children were left. And these have been cared for by the lodge with unremitting diligence. The son has profitable employment, and the daughters are being carefully trained and looked after in that beautiful home at Goldsboro. The widow wants for nothing. This is but one instance of the practical good which this great institution is doing for humanity wherever it exists. The true secret of the order is doing something all the time. My wife used to think me unmindful of her when two nights

in the week, when not called to do pastoral work, found me going to meet with the Odd Fellows and the Pythians. She, like other women possessed of curiosity, wondered what was the object any way. But since it has been my misfortune for years to be cut off from the sphere of an active life, she has had the secret of these orders revealed to her in a way that has convinced her of the propriety of the step in my becoming linked with the men who belonged to those terrible secret societies. Riding the goat, climbing the greasy pole backwards, and traveling the road to Jericho, are but minor secrets compared with the true secret of Odd Fellowship, or of any of the other benevolent organizations. The true secret may be known and read of all men. It has been in my mind for some time to offer to the readers of The Observer something of the nature and character of Odd Fellowship. Recently, at an anniversary occasion, Maj. W. C. Troy, of Fayetteville, who for many years has been a member of the three-links, delivered an address which brings out some interesting points; and as we are in the same family, it occurs to me to draw on this address for the major part of this week's contribution.

Odd Fellowship is founded on eternal principles, which recognize man as one universal brotherhood, teaching him, both by precept and example, that as he springs from a common head, he is bound to cherish and protect his fellow. It thus presents a broad platform upon which mankind universally may concentrate its energy in offices of benefaction, based on certain truths, which are alike axioms among all nations and creeds. Its sacred tolerance presents a nucleus which, by its gentle influence, gathers within its orbit antagonistic natures, political or religious; controls discord, stills the storms of passion, and harmoniously directs man's efforts to fraternize the world. Its principles conform to law, morality and religion, and do not tolerate conduct opposing true allegiance to country or to God. The walk of a true Odd Fellow is marked

by soberness, justice and generosity. In the lodge room the meeting is a fraternity in its broadest sense. The legislation therein is that which is based on the teaching of the Golden Rule. The world is shut out. No bickering, political nor sectarian controversy is permitted; but each member exercises charity one to another. The Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, the Jew and the Gentile, within its sacred precinct, are held together by three links in the golden chain of friendship, love and truth.

"Friendship, such as was exemplified in the conduct of Jonathan to David, is the corner-stone of the temple of Odd Fellowship, upon which solid base the superstructure must abide until time is no more. This friendship leads to brotherly love, prompting the strong to assist the weak; the learned to instruct the ignorant; and, in fact, it is but a living picture of the good Samaritan still at work. We take pride in the glorious work and the good accomplished by our order. The widow and orphan have had substantial aid, and thousands of the latter cared for, educated and made useful men and women. Since the organization of the order in America 79 years ago, there have been initiated, including those in Australia, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland, more than two million members; and the amount expended for relief has reached the enormous sum of \$71,288,702. (It is a larger sum now.) That you may have an idea of the immensity of this sum of money, I reduce it to a practical shape. It takes 16 silver dollars to weigh one pound. Divide the amount expended by 16, the quotient is 4,455.543 pounds. Now to move this amount of money say 2,000 pounds will be a load for a two-horse wagon, it takes 2,227 wagons, 4,454 horses; and suppose 40 feet would be sufficient intervening space for each wagon, the train of wagons carrying these dollars would be 17 miles long. And these dollars, every one, has gone to the relief of suffering humanity. That is Odd Fellowship. That is its secret.

"It is not, as has been contended, an enemy to the Church, but a powerful auxiliary, a stepping stone to the Church which is composed of a peculiar people zealous in good works. Odd Fellowship seems to reach men, that is, some men, for usually the leaders in benevolent societies are churchmen, that the Church does not reach. And if these men become inculcated with the doctrines, friendship, love and truth, none can deny that good to them has come through their being members of this order. Odd Fellowship in no sense is an enemy of the Church, for as faithful church members realize so do we that the all-seeing eye of God is on us.

"A few years ago I was up in the mountains of western North Carolina building the railroad. Just in the rear of my cabin was a spring so small an ox could drink it dry. In my solitude there one day, thinking of absent loved ones, and my old associates in the Cape Fear section, I diverted these thoughts with a contemplation of that little spring and what it finally became. I saw the tiny stream as it trickled down the mountain side, going on and on until it became a part of the beautiful Nantahala, and then a part of the Tennessee, the Mississippi, the Gulf of Mexico, and at last, lost in, or becoming a part of the great Atlantic, on whose bosom amidst the white capped waves thousands of ships are carrying a large part of the restless human multitude, and the commerce of the world from continent to continent; and to-day, bearing the great navies of the United States and Spain, laden with death dealing missiles, to be used in strife that will turn the blue waves red with human blood. Oh, that the principles of friendship, love and truth might intervene; assert their power and influence; wave the flag of peace; that brother may not slay brother; so our song will be:

" 'Hail angel of the helping hand,
Go forth upon a peace mission grand
Roll stones from darkened tombs away,
Drive out the night, let in the day,
Change hate to love with touch divine,

Thy links around both nations twine,
 Transform each ancient soulless creed
 Into a living, loving deed,
 Till brother man from sea to sea,
 More brotherly in love shall be.
 Hail! angel, Hail! and still we claim
 Odd Fellowship to be thy name! ’

“Seventy-nine years ago Odd Fellowship was as the little spring just starting out, but it has grown and strengthened with the flight of years, until to-day we behold it one of the greatest of human institutions for the perpetuation and strengthening of the tie that binds the brotherhood of man. The order must necessarily grow, and seeing the good which it has accomplished, and continues to dispense, no one can reasonably say anything against it. Millions have already learned to say of Odd Fellowship:

“ ‘Beside the Church in every land
 Odd Fellowship with helping hand . . .
 Is walking forth to serve at need
 And answer prayer with loving deed.
 No rival of the Church is she,
 Her work is that of ministry.
 No new religion does she teach;
 She’s here to practice, not to preach.
 For when the earnest prayer is said;
 Give us this day our daily bread,
 Odd Fellowship produces then
 The needed loaf as her Amen.
 She loves the priest of solid worth,
 She loves the God who gave her birth,
 Call on her, Church of God most high,
 And she will give the grand reply;
 Her million hearts will beat with thine,
 Her banners hail thy cross divine,
 And she will serve as now unseen,
 Thy friend as she has ever been.’ ”

